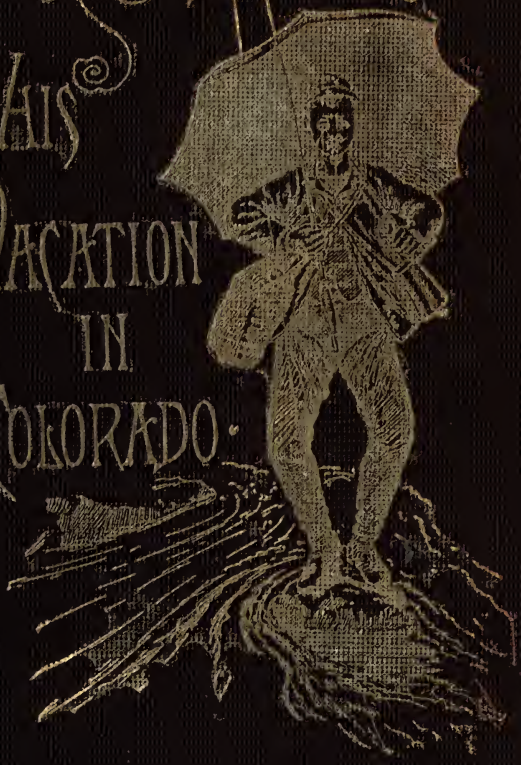
MR. DIDE

HIS VACATION IN COLORADO



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"The Old, Old Story."

MR. DIDE,

HIS

VACATION IN COLORADO.

BY

LEWIS B. FRANCE,

AUTHOR OF "ROD AND LINE," "MOUNTAIN TRAILS AND PARKS IN COLORADO," ETC.

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For him who seeks her solitudes in sympathy, Nature has always a welcome. What we call storms are but her periods of house-cleaning, and the sunshine of her smile lurks in every humor; with love it is easy to adapt ourselves to her moods and with prudence we may avoid her missiles.

MR. DIDE:

HIS VACATION IN COLORADO.

CHAPTER I.

A COLD SLOT.

THE upper end of the mercury is anchored, say in the vicinity of twenty degrees below zero, and there are two feet of snow on the ground. I have to travel a hundred miles or more from Denver; one mile on foot, the others by rail.

As I make my way down street early in the morning, with the rising sun turning the white peaks into rose-color, I feel disposed to halt and watch the changes. But I am denied the privilege of even walking slowly; I must wipe the tears from my eyes and hurry. The few people I meet seem cheery, and they steam along, reminding me of the cigarette smokers; the men wear icicles for beards, and one woman has a luminous nose, and I think is aware of it, for she holds her handkerchief to her face as she passes by. No one says

good-morning—we have become too metropolitan for such courtesies—but every one expresses by a glance, "Cold! ain't it?" and steams on. One should always keep one's mouth shut on such a morning; one's inspirations will always be full and the shoulders thrown back without trying—that is if one be healthy. There is not the faintest indication of a breeze, and the iron tires of a heavy freight wagon, laboring slowly along, ring out like the music of tiny bells, close and smooth, as though the master of the baton were directing a legato movement. The driver walks by the side of his team, thrashing one hand against his shoulder and holding the lines with the other; the horses are half hidden in the steam of their own providing and are frosted even to their flanks. Thunder and Mars! but it is cold! and a cloud of cold air rushes into the car with me. The ebony deity presiding over the coach looked on with a wide, white smile as I thawed my beard.

"Ain't gwine fishin' to-day?"

He seemed a little puzzled when I said I might indulge in a bit of angling. Perhaps he had never fished through the ice, or was not aware that the art of angling depended upon other things than bait and hook and line, or was not aware, in fact, that these tools might be dispensed with, and the votary of the gentle art still be successful.

The only other occupants of the car were two young ladies, neither of them over twenty years of age, I dare be sworn, and behind whom the porter

PIKE'S PEAK FROM MANITOU PARK.

assigned me a seat. They sat facing each other. One of these young ladies was a blonde with fluffy hair daintily banged, her cheeks were rosy and she reveled in the faintest intimation of brevity of nose—just enough of heavenward proclivity to make it cunning. Her companion was a brunette in glasses, possessing a delicate creamy complexion and a close-fitting dainty ear, not marred by a ring or a place for one. I speak of one ear, the one immediately under my observation. I subsequently learned that she was endowed with a pair, and they were mates, very pretty, and uninfluenced by the cold, of a delicate pink that seemed to rival the exquisite tint of sea shells I had seen; a very bewitching ear, an ear into which a lover—but perhaps I would better not follow the lead of that ear any farther, and will let go before I fall into trouble. Being absorbed I did not catch what the blonde said to the ear, but having released myself, I took in the reply:

"Darwin's theory is, to my mind, correct, and the strongest argument in favor of immortality within my experience."

An experience of less than twenty years! Think of it!

The blonde put on a look of deeper interest; as for myself, a feeling of weak dependence began to creep over me and finally settled in my back. The brunette continued:

"We know that man is an improvement on the monkey, and we know how imperfect man is even

in his best estate—are we not authorized in believing that the next change will present something grander?"

I began to wonder whether some man had not failed in his contract with this young lady. The glasses suggested Boston, and yet she was too young for a vagrant schoolma'am or a victim in a desert world. I debated concerning the man and whether I should blame him, if one were in the case, and my wonder quite resolved itself into a conviction in favor of the man. To set my mind at rest if possible, I changed my seat to one behind the blonde. When I saw the pretty, quiet face, and the eloquent, brown eyes appealing to the blonde for approval, I was more in doubt than ever. To get out of the labyrinth I went into the smoking room and took counsel of my briar-root and the foot-hills.

Snow everywhere! The willows are dressed in gray and the pines are almost black; the purple haze of summer has changed into a veil of white and the shrub oaks are garmented in ragged coats of brown. No living thing, except the snow-birds, is in sight between me and the hills, piling tier upon tier to the summit of the range. It is not like looking back from the front seat in the pit upon a grand-opera night—the colors are all sober. Where the rugged cliffs are too precipitous for the snow to cling, I find Titanic jewels with white settings. It is a good time to learn, in truth, how rough and broken are the outlines that the sum-

mer's breath makes smooth. Stripped of their finery their majesty is sterner, that is all, but they are still to be reverenced—there is the difference, merely, between the smile and the frown of one we know to be worthy of love, but always lovable. The fences make the white fields look like great, clean napkins edged with black lace and spread out smoothly, to dry.

As we get farther away from the Platte Valley a bird of evil omen shows himself, looking blacker, if possible, as he hovers over this ocean of white. I wonder what has become of the ravens? In the early days they were plentiful and tame, coming into town and perching on the fences and house-tops, alert for food, and in the evening, before twilight would set in they were wont to string along overhead, upon lazy wing, to their roost up the river. We must have become too metropolitan also for these sable friends and they are going out with the pioneers! When I saw this solitary representative of the old abundance, he brought to me the remembrance of other changes—I realized thirty miles an hour and steam, instead of ten miles and mules; a luxurious car with scarcely a vibration, instead of the swaying Concord redolent of old leather, musty hay and the stables. Overcoats, buffalo shoes and blankets are necessaries no longer. Yet the old coach possessed some excellent attributes: it was a great leveller of artificial barriers; its patrons were democratic in its presence if never so before or after; they

were rarely otherwise than jolly; the emergency demanded cheerfulness, as hardship always does if one would succeed in overcoming obstacles; one might not sit and dream with open eyes in such surroundings. Shadows of familiar faces are flitting about me, very eloquent they are in their silence. And now and then will come one, and another, demanding deeper recognition and whose ways are so sweet to remember that I forget all except the old coaching days and——

But I declare! while I have been drifting, the window has grown dim—it must be with the frost —and I am compelled to wipe it off that I may see a bevy of snow-buntings; bright little fellows in mottled jackets and black neckties. They easily make, in their billowy flight, twenty-five miles an hour. The train is going at that rate, or more, and they keep along with it as if to cheer us on the road for a few hundred yards and then alight to have their places taken by others. They are very numerous, thanks to some one who loved them and placed a penalty in the statute books against their destruction.

Down there in a hollow, sheltered by the bluffs, are a cabin and a corral, and a few stacks of hay protected by a fence. Outside stand three creatures drawn up, and shivering, it must be, wishfully feeding their minds on the unattainable luxury under their noses. I would like to halt long enough to drive the owner out of bed, or away from his fire, with hydraulic appliances. A mag-

pie alights on the back of one of the cows, perhaps to inspire her with hope and to remind her that summer will come again.

As we climb toward the summit of the Divide I catch a glimpse of one of my castles. When travelling by I always look out for this property of mine, to assure myself that it has not been trespassed upon. Some one has taken the liberty of levelling a camera at it, and bestowing a name upon it, thinking it deserted, perhaps, and assuming a claim upon it for that reason. But it is not, nor has it ever been deserted since my knowledge of it; my people are always there. Sweeping round a certain curve in the road the grand pile, without moat or drawbridge, now comes into full view. Its white turrets shine in the morning sun and its grand doorway is always open as a token of the hospitality ever to be found in its spacious halls. It is the old-time hospitality, of course—say of the feudal age—rude, maybe, but bestowed with royal munificence, to be in keeping with the precincts. Claw-hammer coats, vests of percale cut low, and glaring shirt fronts of linen would be novelties amid the concourse of mailed cavaliers and hardy retainers wont to gather here. Its great banqueting hall is decked with ghosts of armor and the rugged walls are hung with rude implements in keeping with the ghosts; the skins of beasts serve as beds or floor cloths as occasion may demand; rough benches and a long table with no sign of covering; a high stiff-backed chair at

the end above the salt, where may sit the master. The broad fireplace is aglow this cold day and the fire roars and sparkles up the wide chimney, and dogs lie dozing in its cheerful warmth, while leather-clothed servitors clank back and forth. But how quickly the dogs awake and all the surroundings vanish at the sound of the shriek ahead of me! We have seen much at the rate we are going—and it is better so—we are not moving backward; the broadcloth claw-hammer is, after all, an improvement on the coat of mail.

My other grand estate south of the Divide is also encumbered with the winter mantle, and because of it the red ruins over under the foot-hills are more sharply defined. The red castle on the left with its arched porchway stands out grandly against the clear blue background. But there is no one at home, the place seems deserted for the time; the usual inmates may be away on a hunt in those groves beyond, or perhaps they may have vanished for the same reason as did those we found on the north side.

The air grows warmer as we go on. Above the Peak a few clouds are hovering, and I notice above the summits of the lower mountains two long, slender clouds of a deadwood color. Presently these join at one end, and soon the other ends swing together and form an oval with a stretch of blue between, and there is a lake above the horizon. It requires no stretch of the imagination; on the contrary, I find I am compelled to satisfy

my mind that one part of the cloud must be above the other, else the highest is the near shore, in the plane of my vision, and I look across a sheet of blue water to the farther side. An irregular rift in one place makes a cove, and on the bank is a cabin, and around the edges is fallen timber. Thanks to the absent winds, I am for twenty minutes or more treated to this view of a lake and its wooded surroundings, made of a strip of blue sky and a cloud.

It is not necessary that I disclose where I had dinner this day—there were no bills of fare printed, and as I took a seat at one of the small tables I saw that the others were not crowded. It was evidently a cold day for the landlord as well as the rest of us. At one of the tables stood the blonde, her hat and cloak off, and a dainty white apron, with frills and pockets, tied about her waist. She was evidently not here in the character of a guest. Before I had time to wonder why she might be here in the other capacity, a voice at my shoulder said rapidly:

"Roast-beef-boiled-mutton-caper-sauce-pork-and-beans-veal-pie."

I thought I recognized the tones and squared myself to take in the glasses and brown eyes of the brunette. While I studied them she said it all over again in the same key and without pause, as though under conviction that she would forget a part if she failed in the stereotyped manner. She smiled at the end of the second stanza and I

saw that her teeth were very white and even—were pretty, indeed, and so was the smile. She sang it again, a note higher, and at the conclusion I could trace only the ghost of the smile. It was time for me to respond. I was painfully aware of it, but somehow I persisted in wandering away thousands of ages and drifting about in the mysteries of the primary period, barking my shins on the azoic rocks trying to find the starting-point and to trace the connection.

"Will you tell me what you want?"

The mood was now imperative. I said I could not tell her that, but I would take pork and beans.

CASCADE.

CHAPTER II.

A WARMER TRAIL.

A SCIENTIFIC knowledge of botany is by no means essential to happiness. Latin does not add an atom of beauty to the wild clematis. One can admire a healthy, bright-eyed baby without knowing its name. This morning after I start out on the railroad I notice that the July flowers are abundant on the slopes leading up to the foot-hills. Great patches of wild poppies grow here and there —it is not an infatuating plant, but one loses sight of the coarse leaves in the delicate white of the bloom. The bluish-gray of the wild chamomile of itself makes a rich carpet, but into this the hand of the Master has woven a countless variety of colors. Hanging in bountiful clusters of crimson and scarlet is a little flower, shaped like that of the honeysuckle; beside it, pendant from their slender stems, a wealth of purple bells, while a little canary-colored gem—a tiny, perfect, five-pointed star—peeps up modestly, as if asking permission to add its atom to the gorgeous pattern. So we have acres of tender beauty. I am glad to know that I am not alone in the enjoyment of it. At the first station, where the liberty of a few

minutes' pause is allowed, a gentleman with his trousers in his boots gives us to understand that appearances are deceitful, by gathering a bouquet, and a young man in light-colored tweed, small umbrella and eyeglass redeems himself also, in like manner. The ladies are delighted and full of wonder, so beautiful they are—the flowers, I mean, yet lacking fragrance; how can it be? Two senses at least expectant and only one can be gratified? A little three-year-old, disappointed, stigmatizes them as "weed flowers," but is compelled, at the instance of a juvenile friend, to admit: "They are pretty, anyway." They have a generous influence too; people who had barely looked at each other for forty miles, pleasantly express a common sentiment one to another, it may be a smile or a glance merely, but it is sufficient to make them know they are of kin; even the young man with the umbrella unbends and feels on the same plane with humanity.

The delicate haze of summer is again upon the hills; the great, white napkins of a little while ago are changed into fields of grain shimmering in the sun as they are brushed by the gentle wind; the cattle no longer haunt the hay-stack, but slowly feed along the mesas, or, filled and sleek, complacently chew their cuds in the shadows of the pines; my castles on the Divide give evidence of thrift in the surroundings, and in their summer garb display the exquisite taste of their mistress; the song of the meadow lark strikes high above the roar of

the car wheels, and you lose entirely the clang of the iron in the clear, sweet trill from the golden-throated beauty perched upon an adjacent fence, or half hid in some grassy tussock; the pines have turned to a lighter green, the willows are in full leaf, and as the eye sweeps over the brilliant carpet toward the foot-hills and beyond, it encounters the only sign of winter in the patches of snow lingering in the clefts of the distant range; you mark the irregular sky-line of the towering summits against that background of delicate blue, while the loftier peaks may be kissed by a cloud. Does disease weigh you down; do you fret under the vexations and disappointments of the daily drudgery; has the sordid strife among your fellows made you feel that life is not worth living; does sorrow brood in your heart? Why, look you, this leaf is a panacea for hurt minds! it was not created for you, but you are so constituted that you may find solace in it if you will—it is one of the many out of the book that gives our copper-hued, untutored brother, *faith*. Will you accept less than he?

But I am reminded that if I loiter so, I shall not reach Cascade in a week. The Deacon, a young friend of mine, and the Major, are to join me there, fully equipped for a campaign in the Roan Range. I propose, however, to make them stop by the way, as the humor moves me.

Speeding across and down the south side of the Divide, I notice trespassers on a part of my whilom wild estate under the foot-hills at the right.

Specks of cottages perched upon the slope of one of my glades do not add to the romance of the picture, yet I feel a bit flattered in that the builders have exhibited good taste in selecting a location for their brown-roofed boxes. They can be cool in summer and enjoy a view of mountains and plains. Then they may speculate, too, upon what preceded the pines and grass-covered earth about them. The gorge just back of them, and the meagre creek tumbling out from it, give a hint, and as we move quickly down the narrow valley dolmons here and there indicate that the little creek is only the remains of a river of ice. These monuments of the centuries are very abundant hereabouts. I have seen fossilized bivalves from this same drift down which I am speeding, and am set to wondering what kind of mortals inhabited these shores when those oysters were growing, and whether the brown-roofed cottages on the slope above are an improvement upon the architecture of that epoch. Or how many millions of years preceding that ice and ocean age this same valley was a bed of verdure, as now; and whether those who stirred up the soil are permitted to look on us and whether they do so in sympathy with us in our tragedies, or are our tragedies all comedies to them?

Loitering again! well, why may one not loiter when he finds a thrifty city of his own time flourishing on an old ocean bed? This new city is filled with the refinement and culture of the age, even

its outlying shanties have an air of respectability. It has its share of vices too, no doubt; however, reformation is not my mission, the duties are too delicate; I might be admonished to "throw the first stone" if I dared. But there is no harm in wondering whether the culture and refinement that flourished in the same spot a great many centuries ago was different from the present ideal. We will not discuss it, as you suggest, but sweep round and into the mountain gorge at our right, looking down, as we speed along, upon Manitou. The Spirit invites one to linger again, and there is comfort in the reflection that the Kind Mother will welcome our coming, without stopping to inquire whether we are compelled by the result of our vices to seek her beautiful places, or are prompted by our virtues.

Thirty years since, the way we are travelling was an unbroken wilderness; the Ute was only then being succeeded by the prospector. Had it been suggested to the latter that his successors would ever journey by rail, it would have moved him to pity for the unfortunate mental plight of the prophet. A broad-gauge train of cars speeding over the way where he found it toilsome to creep! Could anything be more preposterous? Yet we are careening round graceful curves upon the precipitous mountain sides, rushing over bridges that span yawning chasms, plunging from light into darkness and out again from the short tunnels into the light, ever on and up without impedi-

ment. Surely, for the first time, it is like a pleasant dream, and one almost forgets to take in the gorgeous, ever-changing panorama made up of pinnacles, pine-clad hills, towering cliffs and flashing stream. Soon the gorge widens into a cozy dell; to the right, a gentle grass-covered slope, with countless wild flowers woven into the pattern, and groups of young pines here and there, leads up to a tier of hills with rock-crowned summits. To the left is Cascade Cañon, sentinelled by lofty cliffs, and from out its shady recesses comes tumbling the bright mountain stream that suggested the name.

The departing train leaves, besides myself, the gentleman with the eyeglasses and slim umbrella. After dinner, while I solace myself with the briar-root, this gentleman sits a little way off on the veranda puffing a cigar. There is another, an obese party, walking up and down; he is not to be mistaken; his boots are shiny, so are his coat and trousers, and his felt hat gives token of grease and dust about the band. His shirt bosom discloses a compromise between cheviot and wool, and he wears an immense gold nugget for a breast-pin. He possesses the air of one with prospects and bestows an occasional glance of inquiry upon the gentleman with the umbrella. He catches the latter's eye, and halts, almost imperceptibly, feels encouraged, nods and approaches; then with an expression of boundless hospitality pervading his entire person, bursts forth:

KEY-HOLE.

"A stranger in Colorado?"

The gentleman with the eyeglasses pauses in the middle of a puff, looks up staringly, and the next moment relapses into his wonted contentment, while the native takes a seat.

"Ya-a-s."

"The grandest country in the world; scenery unsurpassed, and the climate superb; the air—there's nothing like the vivifying air—do you notice the air?"

"Notice—ah—notice the aha?"

The stranger dropped his eyeglass, replaced it suddenly and stared a further inquiry at his interrogator.

"Exactly—the lightness of it—its purity—the ozone, as it were——"

"Aw—y-a-s—I smell the fwagwance of the pines, and I feel sleepy when——"

"You've struck it, my dear sir—that's what every one says—they always feel sleepy on first coming out—but you'll overcome that in time—it's a wide-awake country, you will find."

"You have wesided some time in Colowado, y-a-s?"

"Well, y-e-s, so, so—a few years, long enough to become acquainted with the ways of the country. I came out to see about certain little mining interests," he continued in a burst of confidence, "and was detained longer than I expected, and now, I could not be induced to go anywhere else to live."

There was an air of firmness in this avowal of attachment that carried conviction with it.

"You are intawested in mines—y-a-s?"

"Slightly—enough to occupy my leisure time, that is all."

From the manner of the man he might have owned the State, exclusive of the mines.

"I have one nice little piece of property over in Dead Man's Gulch, I think of developing some day."

And while he patted this property on the back, so to speak, he plunged his hand into his pocket for—a specimen, of course—"ruby silver"—fabulous in ounces to the ton.

"Wooby silvah?" I heard the stranger inquire, as I relighted my pipe and started for the cañon.

The broad avenue quickly narrows into a trail, leading into charming nooks and shady retreats. The air is fragrant with the perfume of the pines and the half mile of cascades contributes to the delight with its music. The bed of this mountain brook is precipitous and has no still reaches in its current. There are seemingly a dozen picturesque waterfalls in its course, and the giver of names seems for once to have been moved with happy intelligence and good taste. At the Naiads' Bath I come to a halt in search of an Old Man, who, I am told, presides over this place sacred to the spirits that flit hereabout, to indulge in their holy ablutions. The early afternoon sun lights up the gray and brown of the cliffs almost overhead and helps work the stately rocks into fantastic shapes. I

find him at last, on the opposite mountain side, a tutelary deity carved out of the cold rock by the hand of old Time, and looking down silent and grim upon the consecrated pool of crystal. Not a great way below his chin, sits a modern belle, thin at the waist and with flowing skirts. The sculptor must have anticipated the day when she would be in the fashion, and set her up as a satire in the sanctuary.

While I rest here, peering into the depths in search of the ethereal beauties which I know must be sporting there, and who will be revealed to me by the bright rays glinting through the foliage, and while I listen in vain to catch some change in the deep notes of the silvery organ almost at my side, I am conscious of another presence and look up. The young woman in glasses and her companion with the fluffy hair are standing within a few feet of me. I am at once reduced to plain diet; even Darwin is forgotten, as his fair disciple with uplifted hands exclaims:

"Is it not lovely!"

Her companion had barely time ecstatically to coincide, when the man with the mine and his newly-found acquaintance climbed into sight. The man with the mine remarked for the benefit of all:

"Splendid site for an overshot wheel."

The gentleman with the umbrella said:

"Chawming," leaving one in doubt.

But a startled and evident feeling of astonishment made itself manifest in this gentleman's face

as the Darwinian, hearing voices behind her, turned in his direction.

"Why, Miss Gwace," he exclaimed, dropping his umbrella and extending both hands, "this is a vewey gwatifying supwise."

Miss Grace did not seem so much gratified, accepting one hand only, and allowing "Mr. Dide," as she named him, to recover his umbrella with the other.

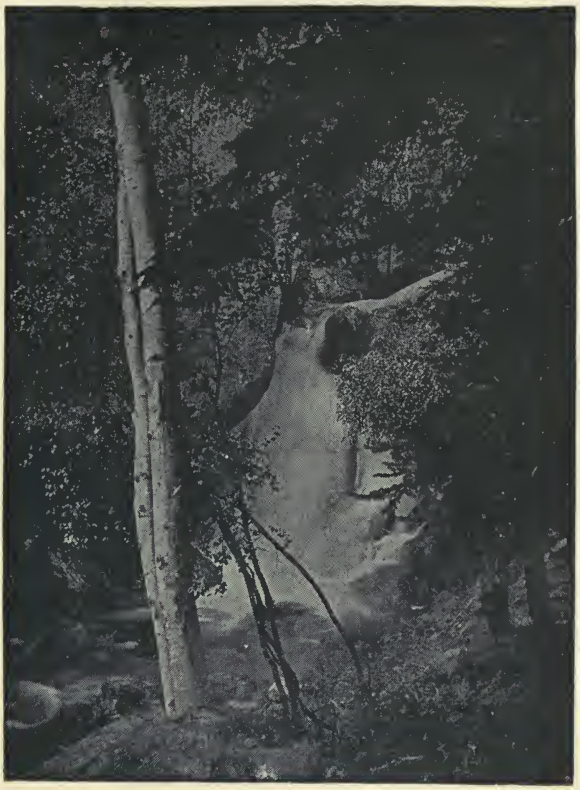
I considered it high time for me to move on. I had not gone far when I heard a footstep behind me, and looking back, discovered the native puffing up the trail. He had taken off his coat, and was perspiring freely, so I halted, feeling a weakness for the practical mind. At the same time I took comfort in the reflection that there were many economical methods of exit from this life, and that the man with the mine might find one to his taste. If he would only fall off a rock! When he came up very red in the face and had mopped his thinly-covered temples with a questionable handkerchief, he told me it was "hot." I acquiesced by a nod, and he felt encouraged. I knew intuitively what he would say next, and in that affirmative sort of way that precludes denial:

"Stranger in Colorado? What part of the east are you from?"

"Italy."

"No! why, you talk like a native."

As it was the only word he heard me utter I considered him a competent judge, and felt flattered.



McGregor Falls.

I inquired if he had explored the cañon, and he reluctantly denied that he had, but was going now to the top, notwithstanding it was "hot work" for a man of his "build." I wanted to give him credit, and would have done so, but for his remark touching the beautiful waterfall below. While I kept moving it was impossible for him to talk without discomfort, and I prayed that the way might become more precipitous. Suddenly the trail presented a termination. The rocks towered up grandly to the right, to the left was a steep incline, and directly in front a pile of rocks blocking up the way, save for a slight rift that might admit my working through. "The prayer of the wicked availeth not." I felt that I was one of the righteous: the man with the mine could never accomplish that keyhole, nor could he get around it. I went on with reverence and humility. When I looked around he stood on the lower side of the impassable barrier in evident contemplation, his hat pushed back, his coat still on his arm, and one hand poised in the act of mopping his dripping face. I found the grotto: great slabs of granite leaning together at the top and edges made smooth by the tempests of the ages, leaving a capacious, cool retreat below. I felt a momentary regret at the condition of the man with the mine, and lay in the shade listening to the music of the brook singing to me its mysteries: whence it came, whither it was going, and of its adventures thus far by the way.

CHAPTER III.

TWIN LAKES.

When the Deacon put in his appearance the next day according to appointment, he desired to know, first, whether I had gone up the cañon. I told him I had, then he wanted to know what I had seen to be pleased with. I advised him that when I had a week's leisure, and he felt inclined to listen, I would "dilate fully" my afternoon's experience; that a week devoted to the relation of each half day's enjoyment would be none too much; whereat he seemed tickled, for the cañon is a weakness with him. When I told him I had returned from the grotto in the cool of the afternoon after a delightful interview with the nymphs of the neighborhood, he insisted that I had made a mistake; that I should have climbed on up to the carriage road, and returned by that way, whence a delightful view of the valley and the wooded mountain sides could be obtained. But I reminded him I was in the humor to court the hidden recesses rather than the sunlight, and besides, that just above the grotto it was necessary, if I would go on, to swing off a perpendicular rock six feet, and I did not care to risk the leap. Then

he advised me of another trail turning off to the road, just below the Naiads' Bath, where the ascent was easy, and exacted a promise that the next time I would come out that way.

The Deacon being assigned to the office of guide and general counsellor concerning the early part of this expedition, he suggested that we take a trip into Manitou Park. It became my duty to inform him that we could not in a season, let alone three weeks, visit all the places of interest this side of White River; that we might stop a day or two at Twin Lakes and thence we must go straight into the wilderness.

"But there is a party going over into the park this afternoon; the station is only eight miles up the road, and we can have a delightful drive of half a dozen miles, and be back in time for the west-bound train to-morrow."

"Whom shall we have in this party, Deacon?"

"A couple of ladies, and a man—a dude—with an eyeglass; the ladies are pretty——"

"Deacon! Deacon! none o' that——"

"But see here, I mean the ladies are attractive, and——"

"Yes, I understand—one talks Darwin and wears glasses, and the other is a blonde."

"Exactly—where did you become acquainted with them? I had thought to introduce you."

I was compelled to set the Deacon right and inform him of my last winter's trip. Then I declined his offer of an introduction. He seemed a

little nettled at my indifference, and thereupon I pleaded old age in extenuation of my lack of gallantry.

"But, Deacon, how long have you been acquainted with these ladies; and who are they?"

"Oh, several months—the train is coming, let us go in to dinner."

I conjectured that there was a sensitive spot in the Deacon's anatomy, and I had unconsciously touched it with a rude hand. To apologize further at present might provoke embarrassment, and yet I feared something more was demanded of me. He came to my relief by taking a seat at the same table with the parties in question, leaving me in company with the Major, who had arrived on the train.

"Where is the Deacon?" was the Major's first inquiry. I motioned in the direction.

"Whom have we there?" I could give him no information, of course, and we discussed our dinner with the prospects which Twin Lakes might afford.

From the rear end of the train as it nears Manitou Park station, a view is had of the great peak which dwarfs that from the plains. The mountain seems to quadruple in size and grows in grandeur, until the great mass overtopping its companions appears to be standing alone, endowed with the consciousness of its own majesty. Miles beyond, and when we are traversing the lower end of the great South Park, the noble pile still stands

ARKANSAS VALLEY.
(BUENA VISTA.)

out, from its azure background, the gray of its rocks and the snow-drifts flashing down a royal smile in the afternoon light. Ahead of us is the Musquito Range, with Buffalo Peak serving as another grand landmark in the bewildering assemblage of lofty mountains; and the park, for thirty miles, seemingly as level as a floor, reposes peacefully in its cordon of hills.

At Idlewild our list of travellers is added to—a broad-shouldered young man and a young woman. The boot heels of the young man appear uncomfortably high, and he consequently bears his weight upon his turned-in toes. The new doeskin trousers incase a pair of caliper legs, carrying with them the impression that their owner is astride an invisible something and is not at all accustomed to walking; the Prince Albert is unbuttoned and the white vest is ornamented by a large chain with a silver horse pendant; a low-crowned, broad-brimmed, white felt hat with a wide leather band, is thrown back from a face that is sunburned but smiling; the eyes of the young man are, no doubt, keen even in repose, but there is a shade of embarrassment lingering about them; he evidently feels that everybody in the car understands the situation, and he is ready to be friendly or defiant as occasion may demand. The color in the young woman's cheeks deepens as she smilingly bustles into the only unoccupied seat, and when the couple have settled down there is plenty of room on the end of the seat for another. She has a paper bag

of cookies; she takes a bite from one and reaches it up to him, he absorbs the remainder as complacently as a two-year-old being fed with a spoon. The cookies disappear rapidly after this fashion; meantime a sleeve of the Prince Albert, with an arm in it, has quietly stolen along the back of the seat, and a strong brown hand rests tenderly on the plump shoulder where it has a right to be. A backward look through the car discloses a smile on every face, but our new friends are busy with the sunny prospects of the radiant world just opening up to them, and have forgotten that they are objects of interest. The Major leaning a little toward me, whispers:

"I don't know just what you think of it, my boy, but I hope it will always be sunny for them to the end of the long trail."

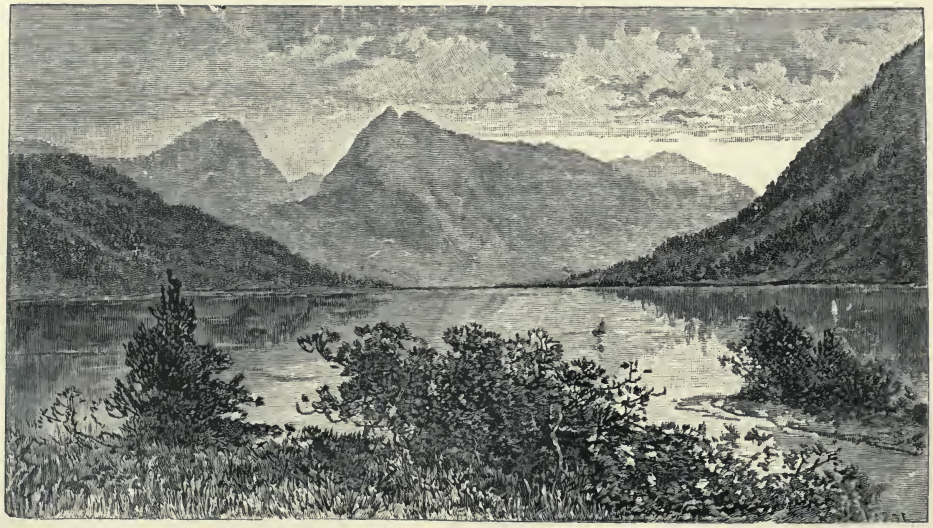
From Hill-top, at the western side of the park, our way is well up on the mountain sides along well-timbered gorges. Presently, from the shelf in the gray granite, one may look down into the beautiful valley of the Arkansas. The pioneers and familiars of the neighborhood will tell to this day the delight they would feel on reaching the summit over the old trail, whence they could look into this vale. Sloping from the foot of what is now called Mount Princeton down to the river, is an emerald floor of six miles in width, skirted far to the east by pine-covered mountains; the river winds along the northerly side until it disappears through a gorge in the distant hills. Beyond

Mount Princeton stand gray and solemn the massive piles of Mounts Yale and Harvard, as if they would shut out from intrusion and guard the lovely valley in perpetual tranquillity. From our vantage-point it seems quiet even now, with the busy town just below. Before the advent of the railroads and the multitude, one may understand why the early miners looked upon it as another dwelling-place of the Genius of Peace.

We lodge at Granite, one of the old mining camps, prominent early "in the sixties," and with golden prospects yet. I get a good bed in a room that reminds me of old times; clean, eight feet square, with a pipe running through the floor from the office stove beneath. The pipe is not to be despised, as an addition to one's bedchamber, if one is unaccustomed to a sudden drop to 45° from 90°. As I stand on the doorstep next morning and take a survey of the town, no longer to be called a camp, I conclude that it must have been named Granite because there is less of that rock here than anywhere else in the vicinity.

After breakfast, at which we taste our first trout of the season, we start on a six-mile ride over a splendid road to the lakes. Though we are fairly in the heart of the mountains the way may not be called mountainous; an exaggerated rolling prairie surrounded by magnificent peaks gives a better idea of the land. The air is fresh and cool, the sun is bright, with no sign of clouds save in the direction we are going. Reaching the mesa from

the valley a storm seems to be gathering about the summits of the Twin Peaks and Mount Elbert. Climbing the last rising ground between our starting-point and destination, I find we are upon what I conceive to be a terminal moraine, or the remains of one, and can look down into the grand court where the Ice King, at some remote date, held high carnival; his throne, twenty or more miles away, guarded on either side by peaks over fourteen thousand feet in height; at my feet the ancient floor of his palace, covering an area of six thousand acres or more, no longer solid, but a pair of crystal lakes flashing under the bright rays of the morning sun. The July heat has not yet melted the white helmets on the sentinels' heads, and back of them the clouds I had seen but a little while before, fleecy and drifting in the azure, are gathering volume and blackness. Between them and me a gray mist, driving earthward in perpendicular sheets, tells of the rain coming down; the long lines brushed by the breath of the storm will wave to the right and left, and then drop again straight as a plummet, while the sun's rays here and there flash in the rainbow tints. The background of the sullen clouds begins to pale a little, then breaks, and a great mass of white and gray and rose-tinted vapor rolls majestically to the left, while the main storm, with its artillery in full play, follows south, down the range, and once more lets in the light upon the seat of ancient royalty.



Upper Twin Lake.

We catch only a few scattering drops while we trot briskly around the south side of the lower lake to the rustic hotel. The landlord takes possession of my grip and I walk off alone to the stream that holds in bond the beautiful lakes; it is barely fifty feet wide by a hundred yards long.

I put my rod together with a coachman on the end of the leader. I had not taken time to soak anything and the kinks were not out, but nevertheless the fly had hardly touched the water before I hooked a ten-inch trout. He gave up readily and I lifted him out with an impression of a good time at hand. But a half-hour's work disclosed not another fin, and I concluded he was the last one there.

Wandering toward the shore of the Upper Lake, I overhauled a man with a cane pole and a bag. I gave him my trout by way of encouragement, as he said he was out of luck, and then I tried the head of the outlet without avail. The man said there were trout in the lakes, but the best way to catch them was to row about with half a dozen poles stuck out at different angles, and "hooks baited with grasshoppers and such-like." I sat on a rock and watched the tints of the Twin Peaks and Mount Elbert mirrored in the smooth water, and prayed for the destroyer, that if he had not already overtaken the pot-hunter, he would; and would burn, not drown him; toast him on a fork and turn him around and toast him some

more; toast him slowly just in sight of the cool, clear waters he had helped to almost ruin. But the government promises to establish a hatchery here and to restock the waters. When that is accomplished what more attractive spot can be found in all these mountains for a summer sojourn for wife, babies and your precious self? It can be made a headquarters, if you wish, and thence you may make easy runs farther into the wilderness. With sweet air, pure water, grand scenery and trouting, what more can mortal ask when he is tired and the baby teething?

Though injured, the lakes are by no means depleted; the fishing is not quite so gratifying as it was twenty years ago, that is all. There are three different varieties of native trout here: the red or salmon-tinted, the lighter-colored variety, and a slender, active trout, different from the denizens of any other waters in the State except, perhaps, Trapper's Lake. The back is a pale green, just the color of the water in the lake, the lateral lines are fine and black, and the spots perfectly round and smaller than the finest shot; it is a graceful fish in its contour, running to three-quarters of a pound in weight, and possessed of excellent fighting qualities.

The State has made an attempt at improving the lakes, and I met the superintendent of the State hatchery here. He said I must go a-fishing. I asked him where, and he said on the lake, if I was not disposed to take a run of a couple of miles

up to the falls, where the fishing was good. I told him what I had heard, that the trouting was nothing to boast of except as the market hunter potted his game. To this he replied that when I came to the lakes I must do as the lakers do. I told him I had not had an oar in my hands for a great many years and was in no humor to be drowned. But he promised to attend to the rowing while I fished. With this assurance and to oblige him I rigged up, under his directions, four pine poles, tied on the lines and fixed up a cast of a coachman for a stretcher and a brown hackle and a gray for droppers. I persuaded him to allow me to take my bamboo, and armed with the implements of torture and my rod, like Hyperion among Satyrs, we stepped into a skiff and started for the lower end of the lake. I stuck out those pine poles with their ten feet of line, two over the stern and one out each side, and sat on the butts. The flies trailed along on the water and I had room to ply the bamboo astern beyond the annoyances floating there. After fifteen minutes of this business, I asked the skipper if he did not think a fellow who called this trouting, ought to drown and go to—sheol. He laughed; I took to praying again and in my earnestness lost one of the poles. Shortly after I had a rise to the coachman on the bamboo and hooked a trout. Inside of two minutes I could not tell whether the fish was on the hook that struck him, or the other three lines, or whether I had four trout in tow.

I found out very soon that there was one trout and four lines snarled. I pulled them all in, took off the trout, untangled the knots and stowed the poles. The man wanted to know whether I had become tired and I told him I had, whereat he proposed to tell everybody that I didn't know how to fish. I said he would oblige me by circulating the report, and that I was mortified only at having tried. With this I sent the coachman astern again and caught another trout; that was all; one trout to the mile. Then I prevailed on him to row me back to the landing at the hotel.

Looking down the lake after a little, I saw the Major bending manfully to his oars and coming home in grand style. When he reached us I discovered among his other trophies of the afternoon, two trout, one weighing four, and the other four pounds and a half.

"You did not go far enough toward the east shore," said the Major; "there is a place about half a mile above the outlet, on that side, where there is grass growing; I never failed in finding good sport there; it is the home of these big salmon-colored fellows. When you hook them they make for the grass below; then, you know, you have business in hand."

Later in the evening, while the Major and I enjoyed our pipes and watched the light of the full moon glimmering on the lake, he wondered what had "come over the Deacon."

Our friend had evidently determined to have

another view of Manitou Park, and I informed the Major of the Deacon's proposition to me.

"Ah! if he were only here!" sighed the Major; "with the lake in front of him, and under this moonlight, or with the shadows of the pines down by the water's edge, and the melody of the miniature breakers to whisper inspirations—eh! old boy, maybe we should lose the Deacon—at least for this trip," he asserted hastily, as if unwilling to commit himself, against experience, and with a knowledge that the sweetest things in life demand a change. "They get tired of us, you know," continued the Major.

"You talk as if the Deacon were in love."

"The symptoms are marked, my boy—he called the other fellow a 'dude,' you say. It looks bad; I fear he'll spoil the biscuit.

CHAPTER IV.

THROUGH THE SAGUACHE RANGE.

MUCH of the way from Granite to Leadville lies close to the Arkansas, and with the level of it, the river being but a few feet below the road. The Major and I conclude to occupy the rear platform and encounter an elderly lady on a camp-stool in possession of the car door. She is here evidently with a view to the scenery. As we squeeze past, we are regaled with an odor of rose leaves, suggestive of old-fashioned bureaus with obstinate drawers, catnip tea and grandmotherly tenderness. The velocity of the railroad train is not to be compared to the speed with which the perfume flashes one back through the decades, to the hard times, and I detect a sigh from the Major as he seats himself upon the car step.

"What are you sighing for, Major?"

With a hasty glance toward the car door: "For the happy times of nearly half a century ago."

"And the rose leaves——"

"Aha!" with a cheerful smile, "you caught the fragrance too, did you, my boy?"

Except for the rumble of the car wheels, silence reigned for five minutes; the Major's meditations

Loop.

were finally interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Dide, camp-stool in hand. The new arrival had just taken his seat on the side next the Major when the old lady exclaimed in a shrill treble:

"Land sakes! I believe in my heart that crick is runnin' up hill."

Certainly from our level, and running in an opposite direction, the current had that appearance when looked at casually.

Mr. Dide turned toward the lady, stared, and addressed her:

"Begpahdon! But weally that is not phenomenal."

"Eh?"

"It is not unusual foah watah to wun up hill."

"Where was you born and bred, young man?"

"New Yauk."

They were both serious, the old lady, with her head thrown a little forward and inclining to one side, gazing at him over her glasses.

"What's your business?"

"I am a gentleman of lesyah, madam," and for the first time something like a smile hovered about the mouth of Mr. Dide.

"Evidently you was brought up that way—you ain't married, surely?" with a manner implying that though the world were full of feminine fools, he had not discovered one foolish enough to enter into the marriage relation with him. Mr. Dide seemed discomfited, but rallied in a moment.

"Begpahdon! but you know the earth is not a

spheah but a spheaoid, flattened at the poles, and the equatah is a dozen miles hiah than the surface at the poles, and that some of the pwincipal wivahs flow toward the equatah——"

"See here, young man, I don't know as I just rightly understand what you're talkin' about, and I don't think you do yourself. Seems to me you must be one of them chaps that believes his grandfather was a monkey, and lookin' at you I don't know as you're to blame. I've raised nine children, six boys and three girls, all married and settled down 'cept Hannah—she's next to the baby, and I don't know as she ever will; and if I'd had one like you, indeed I'm afraid I'd a-flew into the face of natur and set on him when a baby. Where's your mother? you'd better go to her and let her learn you not to talk to an old woman like me as if I was a fool—there now!"

"Begpahdon, but——"

"Oh, git away with your begp-a-h-don, as you call it——"

"But, my deah madam——"

"But me no buts, and don't dear madam me. I'll tell my Joshua and he'll shake that glass out of your eye for insultin' his mother, he will."

Either the condition of Mr. Dide reflected in the old lady's mind with his eyeglass gone, or his general demoralization under the hands of Joshua, mitigated her indignation; she laughed as she bridled.

"Weally, madam," and Mr. Dide arose, held on

to the guard rail with one hand while he removed his hat with the other, and with a manner that went far toward making his peace, continued: "I should nevah faugive myself if I went away leaving you with the impwession that I intended an insult—believe me, I am incapable."

"Well—don't you try to make anybody believe again that water runs up hill."

"I will not, madam, I assauh you."

"And don't talk as if you was swearin' every time you say *ma*dam. Why don't you say ma'am like a Christian?"

"I will mahm, with plesyah."

"That's right. Set down now, I want to see out. I think somethin' might be made out of you with a little trainin', though mebbe it's too late; 'as the twig is bent the tree's inclined,' you know. What do you carry that little umbrill for, that thing you've got in your hand—don't you know the name of it?"

"Ah, weally—to wahd off the sun and the wain."

"Land sakes—mebbe you think you're sugar and'll melt; and you part your hair in the middle like a gal; I see it when you had your hat off."

"Weally—please excuse me, I would like to pass in."

"Set right down and don't let me drive you away. I've taken an interest in you; where's your mother?"

"Weally, ma—mahm—she has been dead many yeahs—I can just wemember her."

"I know'd it, and you've just been left to grow up of your own accord; been to college of course. 'Squire Dodd he let his Jake go off to college, and he staid just one year and come back with one of them glasses and lost it next day; the ole 'squire kep' him home after that, and set him to maulin' rails in the patch down by the hemlock p'int——"

For half an hour the dear old soul held the disconsolate gentleman in durance. I dared not look at the Major but kept my eyes fixed on the landscape, without seeing any of it.

Reaching Leadville, we searched in vain for the Deacon; his lady friends were also absent, and the Major remarked:

"The Deacon evidently is one point ahead in the game. If he does not turn up in the morning we shall be obliged to abandon him."

Leadville, that has added so many millions to the wealth of the world, is more dignified than half a dozen years ago; there is less of the revolver and saloon and a little more of the church and the Sabbath-school; no longer a mining camp, but a city with only a tithe of its resources developed.

It reposes very quietly this Sabbath morning under the bright sun. Turning from the range at the north with its snow-capped peaks and looking down the almost deserted avenue, I am reminded of another Sunday morning—and it seems only a little while ago—when the same street was wont to be alive with humanity. Coming out of an adjacent saloon a couple of young men faced

each other, blear-eyed and dishevelled; they had plainly been making a night of it. Each stood with his hand on his hip, while epithets, the most choice in the camp vocabulary, flew thick and furious. It might be dangerous or not; perhaps not. But the innocent third party running away or seeking shelter at the side might be in peril. I took up a vibrating station, so to speak, immediately in the rear of one of the would-be murderers, and awaited the opening. It did not come, but ended in froth and the appearance of an autocrat with a star on his breast and a club in his hand. He gathered in the bad men and was about to possess himself of the undersigned, when I felt compelled to explain the situation. He complimented me by saying: "Your head's level," and I was suffered to depart.

From the carbonate metropolis to the tunnel through the Saguache Range the distance by rail is perhaps seventeen miles, the difference in elevation about thirteen hundred feet. To make this distance one can hardly realize that one is ascending, the grade is so light, winding on and about the mountain sides. Lake Valley, with its crooked band of water here and there widening into silvery pools, and the gold and green of its meadow-like spots, seems to be silently drifting down and away. At the foot lies the city we have just left, and beyond is the Mosquito Range. In following the tortuous line the grand peaks seem

to change from one side of you to the other, all the motion being with them.

Mount Massive gives you the aptness of its name. You feel its magnificence as you approach, and that it may be the glorious court of blue-eyed Athena at whose vestibule you stand wonderingly, and whence she issues to kiss the petals of the wild flowers and endow the earth with health and beauty. All about you are the pines, with here and there a patch of aspens, their whitened trunks set in banks of larkspur empurpling the sloping mountain sides. Over deep gorges spanned by threadlike trestle-work, you feel awed at the audacity that planned and executed the way into this solitude. High above the utmost peak of the bulky mass, a spot no larger than your hand is poised in ether, or moving, passes between you and the sun, and you think perhaps of what Tennyson says:

> "He clasps the crag with hooked hands,
> Close to the sun in lonely lands;
> Ringed with the azure world he stands:
> The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls:
> He watches from his mountain walls,
> And like a thunderbolt he falls."

Or as Campbell puts it:

> "And stood at pleasure, 'neath heavens zenith, like
> A lamp suspended from its azure dome,
> Then downward, faster than a falling star,
> He neared the earth, until his shape distinct
> Was blackly shadowed on the sunny ground."

HAGERMAN PASS.

Or older still, as we find it in the Iliad:

"So the strong eagle from his airy height,
Who marks the swans' or cranes' embodied flight
Stoops down impetuous while they light for food
And, stooping, darkens with his wings the flood."

The Major thought he would give Campbell the benefit of his vote, though the old Greek tells us the bird was a robber in his day as he is in ours.

The shriek of the whistle echoes and re-echoes through the impressive silence; it startles you, and you feel as if warned in a weird way by the unseen spirits of these wilds, that you are an intruder. Suddenly you are swept from the bright sunlight, the lofty mountains and modest wild flowers into utter darkness. Your dream of the wise goddess may not be all a dream. You are being hurled, in her anger, from the heavenly heights to the depths of Erebus. Looking out, you see mysterious shadows moving with lights through clouds of smoke, and the lights burn dim and red. There is comfort only in the reflection that mortals have preceded us, and that we are merely in Hagerman Tunnel* and not knocking at the gates of sheol.

In the ghostly light of the car lamp I discover the venerable incubus of Mr. Dide, and inquire what she thinks.

* Hagerman Tunnel is two thousand two hundred feet in length and penetrates the Saguache Range at an elevation of eleven thousand five hundred and twenty eight feet above sea level.

"Land sakes! it's flyin' in the face of the Almighty. I suppose it's all right, but I kind o' wish I was well out of it and with Joshua. I don't know but I was a little hard on that young man with the umbrill."

The Major, overhearing the wail, immediately entered upon the office of comforter, and had but fairly begun when, swish! and we were in the broad daylight once again, on the western slope of the Saguache Range.

There is a beautiful picture to the right; a few miles away, down the mountain side, you catch a view of a little lake, bordered by a strip of level ground carpeted in gold; back of this grow the pines, reaching on and up to the summits of their homes, made dark and green; and away beyond, delicately toned by the ever-present gray mist, stands a lofty mountain range. The engineer is kindly and pauses here, that you may have a glimpse of the enchanting retreat, over the memory of which you may dream when you are back in the turmoil, and that will make you sigh for the coming summer.

The character of the country through which we are now winding our way down toward the valley is more rugged than on the eastern side. The thickly wooded slopes give place to more frequent piles of granite, massive and gray. We come suddenly upon a little park and find the haymakers busy there, with a team of oxen, a motive power already growing quite novel; a little further over,

where the gorge widens, affording a few acres of comparativley level ground, we find the white tents of the campers-out. There is a newness about the cotton habitations that suggests experiment. There are women in sun-bonnets and calico gowns and a ruddiness of complexion no city air can paint. Children with brown, bare legs scratched by the briars, their cheeks tanned to a russet that affords a contrast to the whiteness of their milk teeth. And these jolly little fellows always greet you with a broad smile and a hurrah that is without feebleness or fever. Young men in long rubber boots, helmet hats decorated with nondescript flies and sporting an endless variety of trout rods. All pause to look at the train, an act to which they would rarely condescend at home. But this one, maybe, brings accessions to their ranks from the outside world, or a newspaper, and serves as a link between what we call civilization and the glorious freedom of the wilderness. A little further on, standing upon the bank of a still reach, we encounter a tall "lone fisherman," dressed in overalls, a waistcoat ragged at the back, an old white felt hat with the battered brim thrown up from his face and drooping behind; in his hand a long cane pole which it makes one's arms ache to look at. But he will come in to-night with that canvas bag swung from his shoulder well filled with trout, and prove to you that the fishing is good. Artificial flies are not indispensable with him; grasshoppers when he can get them, bugs,

grubs, a bit of beef or a strip from the belly of his first trophy of the day, will serve his purpose; he is "after meat" and gets it. What could he do with a fly and that walking-beam?

We reach a cañon whose sides at its mouth are clothed with pines and aspens; the rocks have changed from the granite to red sandstone and great mountains made up of boulders and red clay. The latter have been built here by the waters away back in the untold centuries, and of whose abundance the beautiful crystal stream now brawling over its pebbled bed is but a thread. As the once mighty force has cut its way through all impediments and dwindled century by century to a narrower channel, it has left exposed the great red cliffs; falling still farther, soil has accumulated on the more gentle slopes and has given these Titanic piles broad bases of green interspersed with wild flowers, and the delicate feathers of the clematis here and there twine among the willows. The winds and the rains have bestowed their aid and carved the red mass into castles, buttressed and pinnacled. And so, having traversed one of the grandest gorges in the State and enjoyed a fair view of some of the loftiest mountain peaks and ranges, we slow up in the beautiful valley of the Roaring Fork. The Major declared it was the most delightful ride he had ever taken, and was disposed to enthusiasm.

Loch Ivanhoe.

CHAPTER V.

JOSHUA.

WHILE awaiting the departure of the train from Aspen Junction to Glenwood Springs, one of the dwellers in the neighborhood came up with a string of beautiful trout, the largest of which weighed two pounds. Where did he catch them?

"Why, right over yonder in the Roaring Fork; lots of 'em; a fellow got one the other day that weighed three pounds."

The manner of the informant defied contradiction or doubt.

"Not improbable, my friend. I have landed more than one five-pounder from that same water," said the Major.

"See here, mister, if I'd a-know'd you was goin' to chip in I'd a-made it bigger—the last man hain't no show, that's a fact."

"Honor bright, my friend; I camped here nineteen years ago this summer; five-pound trout were no rarity then."

The Major's tones carried conviction with them, and, mollified, the native admitted he had "heard of bigger ones up the fork."

The ride of twenty-five miles to Glenwood

Springs completed our trip by rail. The next business was to look up a man with a team and wagon. We found him lingering over some old circus posters on a bill-board down a side street, which he seemed reluctant to abandon. He had been recommended to us as a good cook, possessed of a complete camp outfit, and to whom the whole country was an open book.

Mr. Miles was a blue-eyed man of forty, perhaps, with a hint of gray hairs about his temples, broad-shouldered and wearing a pleasant smile. He had been to Trapper's Lake times without number, but he "couldn't get a wagon over the trail."

"If you want to go by wagon, the best way is round by Meeker, and up the White River; it's a hundred and thirty miles, mebbe, while it's only about a day's ride by the trail."

"By Meeker," was our route; we had come to look at the White River Valley; we might return to Glenwood by the trail.

"Meeker it is; then four dollars a day and you find the grub and your own saddle-horses, or ride in the waggin,"

After assuring us that he would be back in an hour with "everything ready to roll out for Newcastle," where we were to stop the first night, Mr. Miles took his departure, singing in a delightful tenor, "The sweet by-and-by."

Two hours elapsed and Mr. Miles had failed to put in his appearance. We set out to hunt him

and found his cabin. It was a very neat cabin of logs, hewed to the line, and a rustic porch covered with a wild clematis vine made the place inviting on a warm day. A couple of women in calico gowns and sun-bonnets sat outside picking wild hops from a vine which they had cut off at the roots and brought in bodily. A youngster in slips, regardless of the conventionalities of good society, was standing on his head in the shade of the chimney out of sight of the occupants of the porch. The ground being sandy our approach was unheeded by the women. The hands of one were toil-worn, of the other slender and shapely, but browned by the sun. The Major was about to speak but was forestalled by the imp from the chimney appearing, right side up, with the announcement:

"G'amma! here's men!"

The old lady's face, from her position, was first to be seen, and revealed Mr. Dide's monitress. The other was that of a young woman of twenty, perhaps. As the child spoke the latter raised her hands to the sun-bonnet, and turning toward us, disclosed a very pleasant face with wonderful brown eyes.

"Land sakes! if it ain't you; come in and set down—Hannah, git some cheers."

The Major declined, as we were in a hurry, and inquired for Mr. Miles.

"That's my Joshua, certain. He's gone to hunt his horses; he's been hired to go out campin' with

some tenderfeet, and they are out grazin'; but *do* set down; this is my daughter Hannah," as the young woman returned with the chairs, which she burnished with her apron, though they were entirely innocent of dust.

The Major felt obliged to repeat his excuse; then pleasantly:

"I guess we are the tenderfeet——"

"Now, you don't say!—Land sakes—but you won't mind an old woman's nonsense, will you? Set down, *do;* Joshua'll be here by-'m-by, he greased his waggin just before he went; don't mind the muss—me and Hannah's been savin' these hops, they're better'n any store truck; they're good for yeast; I never could 'bide salt risin' anyway, and for neuralgie, I've suffered with that some, so's Joshua, seems it's in the altitude, that's what the doctors call it, and to my mind there's nothing like a hop piller. Wish you'd set awhile."

The Major assured the good soul that we should be delighted, but really we were anxious to start and had a multitude of trifles to look after. Would she be kind enough to request Joshua not to delay longer than was necessary? and we bowed ourselves away.

The sun went down and Joshua did not appear. At ten o'clock we went to bed with the conviction that we should have to abandon the namesake of the potent commander. About the time we were fairly asleep, he came and assured us, through the door, that he would "be on hand at eight o'clock,

sure, with everything ready." That the horses had "strayed and were not to be found until after dark." We were prompt at the appointed time and waited until nine. The Major was again about to give him up, when he came around with a pair of stout-looking mares and an empty lumber wagon, and announced that he must "go and hunt up an extra spring seat," as we had concluded not to take saddle-horses. He came back in about half an hour, with a seat lying in the wagon, and said he had "a mind" to go after his bedding. The Major suggested that he hurry.

"Oh, I'll be round, you bet."

At ten o'clock he returned with a roll of blankets and we inquired after his camp outfit.

"By the great horn spoon—if I didn't forget all about it; just hold on a minute," and he drove off again. In the course of another half hour he returned with a frying-pan and a broken skillet. We inquired for the plates, cups, knives and other articles supposed to be convenient in camp, including the coffee-pot.

"Well, I lent my coffee-pot to a feller who's gone prospectin' and I don't think he'll be back inside of a week—you've got some canned beans and such like—we can use the cans for coffee, and have a new one every day, and I'm out of plates and cups just now, though if I'd a-knowed it I might 'a borrowed some of Jake."

The Major complimented him on this evidence of cleanliness and economy, and then went off and

purchased the necessary tinware and cutlery. Joshua packed everything snugly and undertook to adjust the borrowed wagon seat. It was found to be too short.

"Well, I swan! but I'll git a seat if I have to steal it—just hold on a minute."

"I think, Mr. Miles," said the Major, "as it is near noon, you'd better drive home and get your dinner and the seat, and call for us in an hour."

"All right, I'll be round on time—hannup, Woman, get on, Baby—we're not goin' to camp here.

"'There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar,
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place thar,
In the sweet by-and-by.'"

"That man and his song match well," said the Major, as Joshua disappeared around the corner and the refrain died away, "'my dukedom to a beggarly denier' he does not get back until too late in the day to start. I wonder if he is not trying to make an extra day in his count?"

At two o'clock he returned, but had not succeeded in obtaining a seat. He stood before the Major with eyes cast down and his forefinger on his chin, evidently in deep communion with himself.

"I wonder, now, where I can get a seat—lemme see—Bowers' got a waggin same as mine, but he started yesterday with a load to Newcastle. Ben

Soggs—no! his is broke. Lemme see — Pat McGinnis—no, he's usin' his every day——"

"Suppose you buy one—is there not a wagon shop in the city?" said the Major.

"Well, I swan! I hadn't thought of that—just hold on a minute."

In the course of half an hour he returned with the announcement that he had found a seat, but the man wanted five dollars and a half, "second hand, and that's a dollar'n a half more'n it's worth, and——"

"Well, get it, we'll stand the dollar and a half."

"All right—just hold on a minute."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we started. We were blessed with several friends in Glenwood; they manifested much interest in our preparations for departure, and, as they had a number of resident acquaintances, the sidewalk was well peopled by the time we climbed into the wagon. Looking over that sea of faces, as I remember it now, every one was lighted up with a broad smile, which resolved itself into a laugh, with a hearty good-by and wishes for luck, together with the request that we "leave some of the game on the White," and would "not kill it all."

We smiled in return, and I felt that I should be happy if Mr. Miles' shoulders were not so broad and I had his head in chancery.

"Where do you propose camping to-night, Mr. Miles?" inquired the Major as we reached the bridge across the Grand River.

"Lemme see—it's fifteen miles to Newcastle, pretty good road, we can make that in three hours with the load we've got; then it's about fourteen miles to Rifle Creek, but there's muskeeters. We might stop at Ferguson's, that's about ten miles beyond Newcastle; that's a good place."

"But it will be quite dark by that time."

"Yes, that's a fact, it will be quite dark by that time."

"Well, it is not very pleasant to make camp in the dark."

"No, that's a fact; you're right about that—'tain't pleasant to make camp in the dark."

"What will you do?"

"Lemme see—we was goin' to stop at Newcastle, wasn't we? that's a good place."

"To camp, do you mean?"

"Yes, good place to camp, or there's a good hotel—we might stop at the hotel over night and take a fresh start in the mornin'"

"How far is it from Newcastle to Meeker?"

"Fifty-five miles,—hannup, Woman! we won't camp here!"

"That's rather a long drive for one day?"

"You're right, it is—but we can make it, with the load we've got—Baby! come out o' that!"

"It would be better not to try."

"You're right—we might camp at Morgan's, t'other side of the Divide, if you want to, that's more'n half way."

"Very well, we'll make Newcastle to-night, Mor-

Queen of the Cañon.

gan's to-morrow night, and reach Meeker the next day—say at what hour?"

"Oh, anywhere before dark, easy."

"Well, we'll see if you can make it."

"Oh, I'll make it, or break a trace!"

The "pretty good road" between Glenwood and Newcastle had recently been traversed by a herd of cattle and seemed the paradise of loose stones. The Grand was muddy, as it frequently is, from the mining on the Blue River and a recent storm. But there is enough beauty in the scenery to compensate one for the roughness of the road, which Joshua seemed to make more rugged by hitting all the rocks in the way.

When we reached Newcastle, Joshua drove up to the hotel and the landlord put in an appearance.

"Why do you stop here, Mr. Miles?" inquired the Major.

"This is a good place to stop, and I thought you said you'd stop here to-night and take a fresh start in the mornin'?"

"We purpose to have an outing, Mr. Miles, and although the hotel may be excellent, we will go into camp just below here on Elk Creek."

There was a decisiveness about the Major's tones not to be misunderstood. Mr. Miles turned around to get a better view.

"All right, just as you say—hannup, Woman! Baby!"

He kept silent until we reached the creek, when

I made a remark about its beauty, then Joshua broke out:

"Fresh from the throne of glory
Bright in its crystal stream."

At the first verse the sternness vanished from the Major's face; he could not resist the inclination to laugh; the laugh was contagious; Joshua turned in his seat with a look of inquiry, and halting in his song, joined us.

"How d' you know the name of the creek, Major?"

"I have been here before, Mr. Miles."

"Oh! How long you lived in this country, Major?"

"Thirty years, next spring."

"No? Then you're a mossback sure enough——

'Tell me the old, old story,
Of unseen things above.'"

"Are you a member of the church, Mr. Miles?"

"Why, I ain't never just professed, exactly—what makes you ask that?"

"Your familiarity with the Gospel hymns."

"Mebbe you don't like 'em——"

"Quite the contrary, Mr. Miles—I not only like them, but your singing."

"Oh, give us a rest, Major—you can't blame me for takin' you for tenderfeet with them knee-breeches."

"What did you pay for this wagon-seat, Mr. Miles?"

"Four dollars,—honest Injun."

"I think we understand each other, Mr. Miles?"

"George Washington and his hatchet—I've felt for some time's if I wanted to kick myself for bein' a fool."

The footing being established, Joshua drew up in a grassy spot near some scrub oaks.

"Just rest easy, gentlemen, till I git this team unhitched, and I'll look after the supper, and put up the tent while you're eatin' it."

"We have only a fly, and will not need that to-night."

"That's an offset to the knee-breeches; if I'd only knowed it! You don't care for a tent, even?

'The proper study of mankind is man.'"

I suggested to the Major that he try the creek,—perhaps he could get a mess of trout for breakfast. He adopted the suggestion, and when we called him, half an hour afterward, he came with five good-sized trout. Not contented with his success, after supper he went to the mouth of the creek and hooked a pound-and-a-half fish, which he brought in with much gratification.

Joshua seemed endowed with new life; he was out of bed next morning and had breakfast prepared before we were fairly awake; by seven o'clock we were on the road. The coach on its way to Meeker passed us shortly after we had started, and would reach its destination by five o'clock. Joshua admitted that he had more than once made

the trip in one day from Glenwood with a light wagon and a good team.

The country between Newcastle and Rifle Creek is blessed with spacious mesas covered with black sage brush. Here and there these acres are under ditch and cultivation, attesting that the uninviting uplands, with the aid of water, can be converted into beautiful farms. We crossed Rifle Creek, up and over a broad mesa to Dry Rifle, and found ourselves in a neighborhood by no means attractive. Sage brush, cactus and greasewood, inhabited by magpies and an occasional raven, do not tend to inspire one with pleasant fancies. The soil is adobe, the gulch contracted and hot, and water to be thought of only; the sage brush had assumed dignity and grown into trees. But the arroyo soon widened and gave us a view of pleasantly wooded low hills, and a cool breeze greeted us. The road was good, and we trundled along in cheerfulness, Joshua aiding at intervals with a lively air from the Gospel Collection, or stimulating us with the assurance that game was plenty "back among them hills." We took a lunch about noon but found the water warm and slightly impregnated with alkali; at Morgan's, where we went into early camp, the water was better.

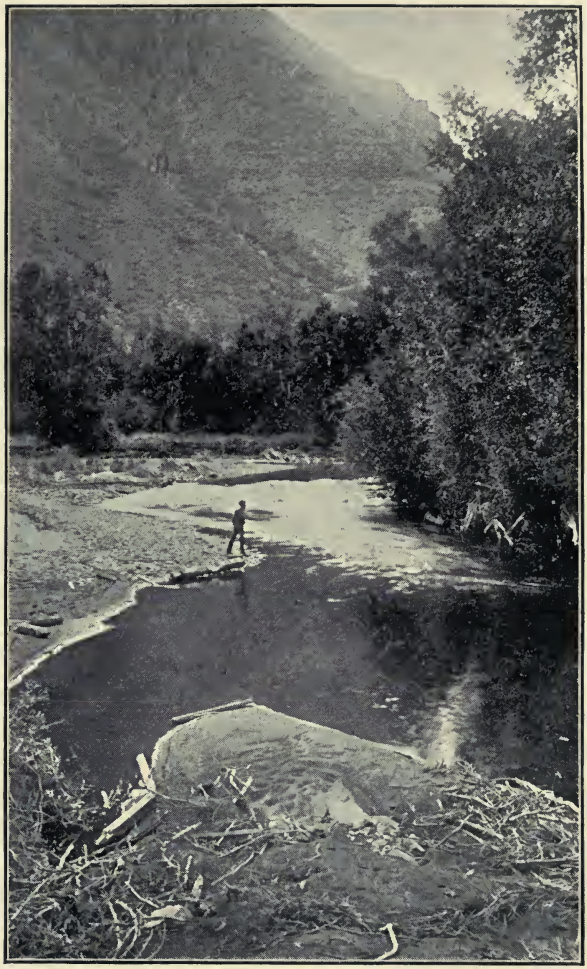
After crossing the Divide, and before we reached our camping-place, the country had improved decidedly; the grass was fresher and more abundant, and the wild flowers added to the attraction of the slope along which we were travel-

ling; the distant hills were bountifully dotted with aspen groves and openings—suggestive to one accustomed to the haunts of deer. Gaps in the hills immediately skirting our way would reveal small parks, beautifully green, and the entrance to them usually guarded by picturesque rocks. In one of these projections a dromedary was conspicuously outlined, with its head carried to the life. In another a hippopotamus was wallowing up from a sandstone bed. In another the form of a woman half reclining in a high-backed chair, while immediately in front was a figure in an attitude of supplication. The afternoon sun shining fairly upon this group gave us a good view of the features in profile; other rocks immediately in front and to the right of the principal figure, were readily constructed into groups bearing a human resemblance, and the Major at once gave the place the name of the Queen's Court. Many have passed this way, no doubt, and have seen a medley of rocks, while others may have enjoyed with us the distinction of an audience with royalty. Balancing Rock, however, cannot escape the attention of the most indifferent.

We finally caught a glimpse of a bit of the White River Valley through the gorge toward which we were moving: a beautiful stretch of meadow-like land reaching up to timber-clothed mountains. The view continued to expand until we arrived at the border of the stream. The way wound among willows and mountain beech, with

a few scrub oaks, now and then an alder bush, and what Joshua termed haw bushes, bringing us suddenly to the margin of the river. The water was perfectly clear and cold, with the brush growing close down to the edges of the banks; just above the ford was a pool in which the Major was as sure there were trout as that the sun shone. It did seem, indeed, that the fish must find delightful habitation in every foot of water in sight. We crossed and made camp, and it was not long before the Major verified his prediction. From that same pool, within a hundred feet of the ford where people were crossing nearly every hour of the day, he brought in two trout that more than sufficed for our supper.

"The stream is just alive with them, my boy—you will have trouting such as you never had before."



On the Frying Pan.

CHAPTER VI.

ON WHITE RIVER.

Two miles, about, below our camp is that part of the valley where the Ute Indian Agency was situated a few years ago. Here it was that the pot-bellied potentate Colorow and his horde of tatterdemalions cruelly murdered agent Meeker, captured and carried away women and children, and committed other unprovoked atrocities—receiving, as an inducement for further outrages, additional government subsidies and comfort. The soil which these "red brothers" refused to cultivate now glitters in a garb of golden grain; they killed their best guide and friend, who never had for them other than kind words and fatherly admonitions, because it required work to change the product from sage brush to wheat. If a man should undertake to harness an adult grizzly to a plough the world would consider him weak and fail to mourn his death, though he would be on a par with the governmental "policy" touching the Indian. A century of failure should, it would seem, convince even a nation that there were defective cogs in its policy wheel.

But the Major suggests that I drop the subject,

unless I desire to write a volume on a disease that I cannot cure. He says it is like any other botch, spoiled in the beginning of its existence, and it would be impossible now "to lick into shape."

"It is only a matter of time when our 'red brother' will cease to be, and our disgrace will culminate at his final departure. We are out for fish and our own reformation only."

Now that we are on the stream that we started in search of, there is no occasion to hurry. We have with us all the necessary accessories to comfortable housekeeping; our time is our own, and we enjoy a solid independence of landlords, railroads or stage-coaches. A house would be an incumbrance and finger-bowls as superfluous as a piano. Do you know what it is to be free, absolutely oblivious to care, past or prospective; with no apprehension touching the condition of your linen, the set of your necktie or the volume of your trousers at the knees? If not, go camping. The destitution of polish on your shoes and the holes in your hat become luxurious, as you view the one through the other while you lie on your back in the shade and pull down the "old felt" to screen your eyes from the brilliancy of the blue roof under which you are loafing. Each month thus invested will add six months to each year; toward the end of your time you will realize this, and find your joints supple to a ripe old age.

The next morning at breakfast the Major re-

quested me to do the fishing for the day's supply; he desired to go prospecting:

"You have not wet a line since we started; you had an opportunity at Elk Creek and here, also, last night. I thought you were fond of angling?"

"So I am, but catching fish does not constitute my view of angling; it is only one of the pleasures that awaits in the vestibule of the temple. A beautiful attendant merely who induces us into the inner sanctuary."

"We'll shake hands on that, my boy," exclaimed the Major.

Joshua, who ate with us at our solicitation, stopped his cup of coffee half way to his mouth and stared at me.

"I'll get a gunny-sack full, if you want 'em, Major,—can do it in half a day," said Joshua, sipping his coffee.

"We would rather you did nothing of the sort, Mr. Miles," and the Major's manner was somewhat testy; "we could make no use of them—the time of plenty is the time to save—you've heard that before, no doubt, or something like it?"

"Oh, yes, I've heard mother say that many a time."

"I thought so—a mother's advice is always good, and you can apply it to fish and other game."

"All right, just as you say."

The Major started off to the hills with his Winchester. Joshua concluded he would stay around camp and "square things up." One of the horses

had stepped on the new coffee-mill and ruined it, and he must look out for another. The principal feature of the new coffee-mill was a piece of clean board about a foot square; the other part of the complication consisted of a tin can. He placed the coffee on the board and rolled it fine with the can: the board, being the important part, in the absence of carpenter shops and sawmills, was the portion fractured, of course.

I put my rod together and adjusted the reel. The leader and flies had been in soak for an hour and were in good condition; I had selected a coachman, a red-bodied gray hackle and a brown cofflin to test in prolific water a theory of mine. The White River in the fifty or more miles we experimented is the ideal of a trout stream. From our camping-place for thirty and odd miles to the cañon of the South Fork is a series of riffles, deep swirls under bushy banks, pools and comparatively still reaches. The willows and other shrubs are so thick that the opportunity for casting from the shore is happily exceptional. There is no satisfactory alternative but to pursue the best method. The stones are clean beyond those in any stream which I ever waded, and the prospect of a wetting from smooth rubber boots and rocks a remote possibility. To avoid the places too deep to wade, crossing and recrossing the riffles becomes a necessity; these opportunities seem to lie at such convenient and appropriate distances that admiration for the skill of the Designer is irresistible; one

takes to the dancing crystal with a love for it, and a reverence for its Presiding Genius. There is a feeling of exultation as one enters and stands solitary in mid-stream and looks down the flashing current; the surging of the water, as it takes his limbs into its cool embrace, whispers a greeting of welcome; hid by the growth upon either side one feels no longer alone, the water-sprites are with him in loving communion and sympathy.

So standing and happily surrounded, I commissioned the gray hackle, at the end of my leader, to ascertain what might be lurking in the shade of the opposite bank, where the current was swift and the water four feet deep, at least. It was taken at once, and inside of five minutes I had a trout of a pound's weight safe in the landing-net. As soon as possible after hooking him, I had drawn away from his hiding-place and coaxed him into shallower and quieter water, so that his neighbors, if he had any, might not be disturbed. After placing him in the creel, I changed the hackle for the coachman and it was taken as readily, the fish being a mate to the first. A third cast resulted in a failure, a fourth brought a rise, a little more line and at the fifth the fly alighted in the acceptable spot, and was taken by a still larger fish.

Changing the coachman for the cofflin, I waded down, close under the bushes of the right bank, crossed a riffle and dropped the fly just where the water slowed up a little, at the foot. It had scarcely touched the surface when I saw the gap-

ing jaws of an apparent leviathan close upon it; at the same instant I struck and the bamboo bent to its work. A leap clear from the water advised me that I had one of the lighter-colored variety and consequently more of a fight on my hands. Five minutes, however, at a guess, sufficed to bring him into the net. He weighed, an hour afterward by my pocket scales, a scant one and three quarter pounds. I lengthened the line a little and brought out another of nearly a pound. If the trout were to keep up to these weights, for only a little while, there would be waste in camp, and I wished for a few smaller. But they did not come to me; either of the next three would weigh three-fourths of a pound, and going back to the slight opening in the brush, through which I entered, I climbed out and returned to camp.

Joshua received the creel and examined its contents.

"You and the Major seem to have the same notions; I thought you would fill up that basket and string a lot on a willer."

"There are quite eight pounds,—sufficient for two meals."

"Yes, I know, but how do you manage to stop? When the fish bite that way I want to catch 'em."

Thereupon I read a homily to Joshua on the art of angling, at the conclusion of which he said he understood what I had told the Major in the morning about the "inner sanctuary."

"That is, I have an idea about it—mebbe I'll

Silvery Cascade.

try it some day; but this is such a dog-on hard world to get along in and buy shoes for the baby! I'm afraid I can't get into your way—a fellow can't live on scenery, you know, and 'tain't easy for old dogs to learn new tricks. But I'll try and not make a trout hog of myself, as you call it, anyway—I think I can manage that much."

He went off with my fish and creel toward the river, singing, and I flattered myself on having made a partial convert.

Just before noon the Major returned, warm and tired, and sought solace of his pipe. He brought with him two willow grouse with their heads shot off. He had found a coal mine in the bluffs above us, near the town, and had discovered other flattering indications of future wealth for those inclined to pick them up. He had also started two deer, "within fifty yards," during his tramp.

"Where are they?" inquired Joshua.

"Over in those hills, I presume," answered the Major, with a nod toward the supposed locality.

"Why! didn't you kill nary one?"

"Nary one."

"Well, I swan—what's the good of carrying a rifle?"

"What's the good of killing what you don't need?"

"Gentlemen, excuse me, I don't mean any offence, but I'm durned if you ain't the queerest pair of cranks in the huntin' and fishin' way, I ever see. I don't know, but mebbe you're right

about it, still I can't get it through my hair. Of course, I don't believe in wastin' meat, *but,* I'd a—*had* to shot them deer."

"Mr. Miles, you ought to live where there is one deer to a township and a trout to a mile of water—you'd change your mind and want to hang the man who talked as you do."

"How'll you have the grouse cooked, Major—stewed or fried?"

"Either way."

Joshua served them up to us roasted, and they were delicious.

Loitering by the road later in the afternoon I saw the coach on the opposite side of the river, before it came down into the bottom-land. There was a passenger on the box with an umbrella. I waited and recognized Mr. Dide, who had added a fishing-rod to his luggage.

"Weally!—dwivah, stop a moment. I am delighted to see you; do you live in the vicinity?"

I informed him that the camp was just below, and we should be pleased to have him call.

"Chawming—thanks; I shall be delighted to drop in."

He did so, just before supper, very much to the astonishment of Joshua and the surprise of the Major. I had forgotten to apprise my friend of the new arrival and of the invitation I had extended. I also confessed a little wonder to myself at the gentleman's prompt fulfilment of his promise, but was none the less gratified.

"I have heard" (it is impossible to spell the word as he pronounced it) "of Meekah, you know, and the twouting, and thought it would be quite novel to wun ovah. The wide was not vewy inviting, but this is chawming—think so?"

Mr. Dide was so truly delighted with the novelty of his experience, and so full of anxiety to make it known, that he was permitted to run on without interruption. Hitherto he had seemed reticent, now he was overflowing in the opposite direction.

"I've nevah twouted, you know, but I shall twy. I bought a pole and some widiculous-looking flies."

The Major suggested that I knew something about the sport, and would, no doubt, assist him in gratifying his ambition. Of course I would, and did. My office of mentor was not devoid of pleasant incidents. He was to call in the morning, with his tackle, and did so immediately after breakfast. He was not prepared to wade, and I borrowed the Major's boots without leave. The rod was a cheap specimen of ash and lancewood, and the dealer had been fair with him in the matter of line, leaders and flies. The Major will bring down the scales at two hundred, Mr. Dide at one hundred and twenty-five pounds, at a guess; in the Major's boots Mr. Dide, I must confess, appeared at a disadvantage. I adjusted his tackle, even to the winding of the line on the little brass reel above the grip, and led the way to the scene of my own recent exploits.

Mr. Dide, upon entering the water, affirmed that it was cold; there was no gainsaying his assertion. He expressed a doubt of his ability to keep his feet, and I endeavored to assist him. He tossed his fly in the direction I suggested, allowed the point of the rod to drop and the fly floated at the edge of the swirl. I admonished him to hold his rod up; at the same instant a trout hooked himself, the little reel spun round and Mr. Dide exclaimed in great exultation:

"I have got him! I have got him!"

"But you will not keep him long, Mr. Dide, if you do not check the line."

"Aw—but I cawn't, you know—oblige me!" and he held out his umbrella toward me. The trout in the meantime was having his own way; the line was fast disappearing from the reel; suddenly it slacked, his troutship was returning, and rapidly. I supported Mr. Dide by seizing the back of his collar with one hand and relieved him of the umbrella, directing him to reel in the line. The fish was without doubt fatally hooked. Mr. Dide, laboring at the crank with a vigor that would have given a hundred revolutions a second to an ordinary grindstone, succeeded in retrieving the slack. As he did so the fish gave a leap half out of the water, and a struggle that brought the butt of the rod in contact with the fisherman's stomach. Something snapped—it was the tip. Still the hook held, the line could be trusted; if the leader and snell proved true the fish might yet be saved.

I directed Mr. Dide to give no more line, but simply to hold the remains of his rod firmly and to stand still, if he could. He endeavored to follow instructions, and I took up my station a little lower down and to one side in shallower water, watching the brave exertions of the quarry to free itself. I bethought me that the umbrella, in the absence of my landing-net, might be put to profitable use. As the fish came my way I suddenly scooped him up from behind, together with an umbrella nearly full of water; the trout went over the edge some time before I could empty the novel device.

"That's the most extwaawdinawy pwoceeding I evah witnessed!" exclaimed Mr. Dide.

Certainly it was beyond anything in my own experience. I concluded that the only way to save the fish was to get to the bank. Mr. Dide declined my offer to take his rod, for which I commended him, but he was doubtful of his ability to stem the current and manage his tackle without my assistance, so I led him ashore and he dragged the trout. Seizing my opportunity, when the nearly exhausted victim was quiet, I lifted him out by the leader. He had hooked himself through the tongue, and so deeply that, notwithstanding his struggles, the wound was but little enlarged, and the use of a knife was required to release him.

Mr. Dide was so much delighted at his success that the damage to his rod was a matter of little

importance. He would have continued to fish with the remains of it, but that I convinced him of the impossibility of casting a fly without a tip. He returned to camp and soon came back with the extra one. I concluded to prospect for openings in the brush. Having found one with a promising little eddy below it, I indicated the best place, in my judgment, at which the fly should be delivered. Mr. Dide undertook the feat and the fly caught in the willows behind him. I released it and the next effort resulted in a good hold upon the umbrella, which the gentleman insisted upon keeping over his head. I was constrained to advise him that the umbrella would better be put aside; he surrendered it to me hesitatingly, as if he might be at a loss without it. He splashed the fly into the water within a rod of the place I had suggested, but that was of no importance; a trout took it in a moment and in the next was flying high in air and eventually became entangled in the brush. I wondered whether first efforts were ordinarily attended with the results I had witnessed, or whether my *protégé* were specially skilled in awkwardness. After he had placed me and my apparel in jeopardy several times I took the rod and endeavored to show him how to make a cast; then I did not blame him so much. But he felt encouraged, and I betook myself to camp, leaving him to work out his own salvation. He came back before noon with the two trout; his rod was broken again and he was very wet, having evidently been up to his neck in water.

SEVEN CASTLES.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE SOUTH FORK.

THE particulars of the disaster to Mr. Dide and what led up to it were brief:

"I hooked a vewy big twout—he would have weighed ten pounds——"

"No, no, Mr. Dide——" interrupted the Major.

"Pon honah!"

"The speed with which you have become proficient as a fisherman is something marvellous, Mr. Dide. Ten-pounders in this water are not within the memory of the oldest inhabitant."

"Weally, he was twice as big as the one we hooked this mawning——"

"Then he must have weighed not quite three pounds, Mr. Dide. The only sure way is to catch your fish and weigh him on the scales."

"Major! Major! think of the penalty provided against that sort of wit."

"It was not so intended, I assure you, my boy."

"But, weally, he must have weighed moah than thwee pounds, Majah, he was so big and he smashed the pole, you know! I hooked him, and he stwuggled violently for a gweat while, and when I sought to pull him out the pole bwoke; he lay on the

watah and I sought to secuah him by going in myself and catching him in my hands; it was vewy cold, 'pon honah; he moved away and I followed him into a hole, but he eluded me."

"My dear sir, you're quite as intrepid as Kit North. You will make an angler, certainly."

"Thanks—vewy much delighted, I assuah you. I have been devising another method of casting the fly, majah. I find it vewy difficult, and it makes my ahms ache. I think I will take a piece of aldah and make a pop-gun and pop the fly out. Did you evah twy it?"

"I never did; with the pop-gun and umbrella you will revolutionize the science of angling."

"No? weally? But the umbwella was not my device, you know," Mr. Dide modestly protested.

"Still, you made the project possible."

"Think so?"

"Do you shoot, Mr. Dide?"

"Aw, a little. I have pwacticed some with a Winchestah, at a tawget, you know."

The Major deemed it advisable to admonish the gentleman that it would be well for him to seek a change of clothing, or at least to wring out his garments and hang them on the bushes to dry. The latter part of the suggestion was rejected as impossible—"somebody might come, you know"—notwithstanding the Major offered him the use of a rubber coat during the emergency. Mr. Dide therefore trudged off toward the town, leaving an impression, to one ignorant of the cause, that a

miniature sprinkler had just passed over the road. After his departure I informed the Major that the gentleman had intimated a desire to accompany us during the remainder of our trip.

"If you can stand it, I can, my boy."

We broke camp and passed through Meeker early the following morning. The town—the site of the old military post—is pleasantly situated on a level place in the valley, skirted on one side by low hills and on the other by the river, from which rises a steep bluff; on the summit of this stands the remains of an adobe signal station, profiled against the background of sky. There is a square in the town, and surrounding it the adobe buildings erected by the government, but now utilized by the peaceful citizens as dwellings or stores. Indians are not presumed capable of bombs, mortars or big guns, and, of course, in selecting a military post with a view to their methods and capabilities a valley with water is better than a hill-top without. The country is rich with ripening grain, and every available acre is either being prepared for cultivation or is actually under tillage. The mountains that border all this valley are low and many covered with timber to their summits. Between the gaps of the closer hills one may discover glades opulent in pasturage.

Near noon we lunched at an excellent spring a little way from the forks of the river. We were overtaken here by Mr. Dide on horseback, for whom we had left, at the hotel, an invitation to

join us. He had provided himself with a new rod and a pair of blankets. What the settlers thought of a man on horseback, with a glass in his eye and an umbrella over his head, riding through the country, has not yet transpired. He had experienced some difficulty at the start; the horse, objecting to the extraordinary equipment of the rider, had endeavored to throw him off, but failing in that, ran away. The dogs also had added to his discomfiture by making frequent sorties, threatening his legs and vociferously assailing the heels of his steed. Mr. Dide had, however, survived all impediments and came up smiling.

The valley of the South Fork is somewhat narrower than that of the main river through which we had come. The brush marks the course of the stream on the left, and beyond it the mountains rise gradually for perhaps two thousand feet, while to the right they reach about the same altitude. The aspen groves are abundant, their lighter green foliage being interspersed with the darker hue of the pines, clothing the sloping hillsides from the base to the summit. The road is smooth and we can trot the horses readily. At times we are close to the river and again half a mile away. Coming to a great clump of bushes on the left, a family of willow grouse was flushed from the grass near the road-side; there were six in the flock, and the major potted four of the young ones, they having alighted in the adjacent trees. We had gathered up the birds and

gone but a little way when Joshua cried out excitedly:

"Look at her! look at her! right ahead there, in the road. Where's the rifle—gimme the rifle!"

Not two hundred feet from us stood a magnificent doe, broadside on, and an easy shot for the veriest tyro that ever pulled trigger. Instead of bringing the rifle to bear or giving it to Mr. Miles, the Major waved his hat and shouted. The beauty ceased staring at us and bounded away gracefully toward the aspens on the right.

"What'n thunder!—Major! you do beat all, that's a fact. Did anybody ever see such a pretty shot!" exclaimed Joshua regretfully and with an expression of disgust.

"Mr. Miles, you should understand, as well as the rest of us, that it is against the law to kill does at this time; it is the close season, and I have no doubt she has a suckling fawn hid not a hundred yards away. We'll have no law-breaking; if we need venison we will take one with horns, not kill the mother and leave the babies to starve. Think of it, man; think of the cruelty of it!"

"Hannup, Woman! ga'lang, Baby," was the only response from Joshua. It came with vigor; disgust pervaded his entire system. We passed the clump of willows, when Mr. Dide, who was trotting along behind, exclaimed:

"Aw, Majah! look theah."

Turning, we saw a buck that had just made its way out of the cover, running swiftly across the

road and making for the mountain side. Joshua brought down his whip upon the horses with his usual admonition to them, but given in a tone that indicated a determination to eschew venison or even the thought of it. The Major smiled with the satisfaction of a man who realizes having made an impression. Reaching the foot of a slight rise the horses were permitted to slacken their pace, and silence reigning at the time, Joshua broke out with one of his familiar hymns:

"Almost persuaded."

"I would rather you were fully persuaded, Mr. Miles," said the Major when the singer had concluded the first stanza.

"All right—here she goes."

Joshua seemed to rise to his best effort, and was unexpectedly joined by Mr. Dide in an excellent bass.

"Well!" said the Major, as the song was concluded, "our lines seem to have fallen in pleasant places, sure enough. I was not aware of the hymn, however."

"If all the hunters that come over here lived up to your way, Major, we'd have to kill the deer in self-defence."

"You believe, however, that my way is the right way, don't you?"

"Yes, I do—hannup, Woman."

Later in the afternoon we came to what is known as the "Still Water." A subsequent examination

of this place in the stream impressed me as being caused by the peculiar formation of the bed-rock. An idea of it may be imparted by taking a dozen shingles and laying them on a level, as you would upon a roof, with the butts lapping a couple of inches only. Consider this the bed of a river with the water flowing over it from the thin end of the shingles, the butts being from three or four feet to ten in thickness. At each butt, or where the rock breaks abruptly, there is a scarcely perceptible motion of the water; immediately beneath is a deep hole, growing shallower as the next butt is reached; then follows another hole; there are several miles of this water in which the current is barely noticeable; the banks are four and five feet from the surface, which is as smooth as glass. The willows grow thickly on both sides of the stream, with breaks at intervals that give one access to it.

Joshua, who was familiar with the vicinity, pronounced Still Water "a dandy place to fish," but we did not stop, except to permit the Major to possess himself of two more grouse, the birds being abundant. We made camp before dark near the mouth of the cañon.

Immediately opposite is a perpendicular bluff of rocks two hundred feet high, or more; slight projections here and there in the face of it serve as footholds for a few hardy bushes, a cluster of wild flowers, or a matted vine; nearer the summit are dwarfed pines. The river sweeps along the foot of this wall; distilled from its near mountain

springs, it is as clear as crystal, and, dashing from the shadows of the adjacent cañon, is, as Mr. Dide expresses it, "*vewy* cold." On the side of the river where our camp lies the valley extends very gradually up and back to the neighboring hills. The grass is bountiful and rich, and we have a cluster of young pines under which we may lounge in the heat of the day. Looking down the course of the river the valley becomes wider, and we have an open view of mountains and green slopes for miles. At our first night's camp in this secluded spot, when the fire has burned low and casts fitful shadows against the opposite cliff, we find ourselves with our feet due north as we lie in our blankets. There is a peculiar charm in the bed of fragrant twigs, with nothing to shut off our vision of the fretted roof. We may gaze out of our shadowy environment into the faces of the bright gems and hold hallowed communion with their mysteries. The liquid voices of the Naiads in their revels sweep gleefully toward me and then away again in softest cadence. The north star and the Dipper grow bright, then indistinct, then revive and grow dim again, as the gentle sprites brush my eyelids tenderly with their downy wings and soothe me into sweet forgetfulness. Some time in the night I awoke; the Dipper had moved, or rather we had moved, and the constellation was no longer in sight. The silence was broken only by the heavy breathing of my nearest companion, the Major, and the hymn from the

river. As its notes rose and fell its somnolent influence took me gently in charge again. The "to-hoo—to-hoo" of an owl interrupted the spell for a moment; I saw him in my mind's eye solemnly staring into the darkness, and I was gone before he had concluded the second call.

When I awoke again it was daylight and I raised on my elbow to take in my fellows. Joshua lay rolled in his blankets under the cluster of pines. Mr. Dide looked thin and singular without his eyeglass. His nose had reached the peeling stage under the influence of the sun, and was decorated with ragged bits of skin, as if it had been caught in a shower of tattered tissue-paper. The Major, with his hat tied over his head, bore marks of the out-door life and slept like a child. I turned out quietly, as the sun crept over the hills, slanting its glad rays against the opposite cliff, and when they touched the swirling water at its foot, I put my rod together, with a coachman on the end of the leader, and walked a dozen paces to a little gravel bar.

I had never before tried the denizens of our mountain streams at so early an hour, and was doubtful of securing anything for breakfast. I sent the coachman over into the swirl and hooked a trout at once; landing him safely, I tried for the second and secured him. Just below me a few rods the river made an abrupt bend, and a great boulder there had accumulated a quantity of drift, under which was a promising pool. I tried the pool with flattering success, landing three fish,

either of which would weigh half a pound. Another cast, a little nearer a log that constituted the main support of the rubbish, and a beautiful salmon-tinted trout rolled up to the fly and was caught. The water was swift, and he caused me some uneasiness by making directly for his lurking-place; if he ever reached the snags that had heretofore afforded him shelter, or the line should foul in the vibrating branches of some drift that swung in mid-stream between us, he was no longer mine. To keep him from his hiding-place I took the risk of refusing him line, merely dropping the point of the rod a little in his more violent struggles; to avoid the nearer brush I went into the water and succeeded in getting below that difficulty. I realized Mr. Dide's conclusion of the temperature, and felt that his adverb was altogether inadequate—a dead failure, in fact; it demanded adjectives in quantity and force. The water reached my knees, and I feared if it rose any higher I should be compelled to take to the bank; rubber boots afford some protection in such emergencies and temper the chill. I had only a light pair of old shoes devoted to camp use in dry weather. Having attained an advantageous position, I succeeded in coaxing his troutship completely away from danger into slower water, and learning that he was securely fastened, I had no apprehension of the result. I allowed him to fight until he was quite exhausted, and then drew him up to and upon the small bar at the edge of

LAKE GEORGE.

which I had been standing. I must weigh him, surely, then and there; and by the pocket scales he brings down the indicator to two pounds and two ounces, and, for "a red feller," he had offered more than ordinary resistance.

There was an abundance for breakfast, and twenty minutes had sufficed to cover the time from my leaving the camp. I gathered up my spoils, strung them on a willow twig and returned. The sleepers had not changed their attitudes, and I gave them the benefit of a morning bell after the manner of an Indian war-whoop. The Major merely opened his eyes, Mr. Dide was startled, and Joshua took in the situation calmly.

"Arise, ye sluggards, and see the result of twenty-minutes' work on the South Fork of the White!"

"I'll discount that before noon," said the major, throwing off his blankets.

While the Major and Mr. Dide made their way to the water's edge with soap and towel, Joshua appealed to me confidentially. He wanted to know why the Major had brought "that Winchester."

I suggested that he might have intended it for bear.

"But see here, now, can't you persuade him to kill a deer, or to let me have the rifle? I see that he keeps the ca'tridges fastened up in that box of his, or stowed in his pockets."

Plainly the Major and Joshua understood each other upon the question of game, but I consoled him by agreeing to comply with his wishes.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPORT.

WITHIN two miles of us was a ranch, where we knew there were several men. While discussing breakfast, I prefaced my request to the Major by intimating these facts, and hinting that a taste of venison would serve as a change from trout and grouse. The Major looked at me and then at Joshua, who was busy over the fire, but attentive.

"Those men will help us dispose of a deer, if you get one."

"Very likely, if they haven't got a supply on hand."

"Suppose you inquire."

"Well, I'll think of it," looking again in Joshua's direction.

"If you'll just leave some of them ca'tridges where I can lay hands on 'em, I'll get some venison," Joshua broke in, giving a trout in the frying-pan an extra turn and pressing the centre down with his knife.

"No doubt," and the Major's visage relaxed into a smile.

"You bet I will. I can't see the use of havin' deer runnin' all over and never a shot fired; there's

a difference between supplyin' your wants and wastin'."

When the meal was concluded the Major shouldered his rifle and sauntered off toward the cabin of the settler. He returned in the course of an hour, with the announcement that the men would "not mind" taking a little meat; they had been too busy for a few days past to do any hunting. They would not object to a few trout, as well, if we had them to spare. This was good news.

"Those men have trapped and killed four bears during the past few days," said the Major.

"Where'bouts?" inquired Joshua quickly.

"Just up there in the timber a couple of miles. The bear killed a horse, and the men have been after the bear with pretty good success."

"I should say so—mebbe I'll go up and see 'em."

"Better not, without a gun."

"That's so—mebbe there's more around," murmured Joshua; "I've no notion goin' up there and roostin' in a tree." In a few moments he broke out with a song which we had not heard from him:

"The Lord will provide."

"I've heard that He 'helps those who help themselves,'" said the Major.

"Look here, major, haven't I been tryin' to help myself for a week and can't?"

There was something irresistibly ludicrous in the pathetic appeal that set us all laughing, including the promoter of the merriment.

"I will try for one in the morning, Mr. Miles, or you may go if you can get back in time to prepare breakfast."

"Oh, I'll get back in time, you bet."

As it was after nine o'clock, the Major said he would go up the cañon a little way and catch a few trout. I was to look after the advancement of Mr. Dide; I prevailed upon him to leave his umbrella in camp, and took him and his new rod under my supervision. The gentleman gave indications of improvement, and I persuaded him to the pool with the drift. After several ineffectual efforts he succeeded in throwing his fly beyond the brush in mid-stream, and hooked a trout that the next moment had the line entangled. He was without waders, and I did not propose to swim in that cold water for the sake of saving another man's leader. I took the rod, but finding gentle manipulation unavailing, I gave the line a pull and broke the snell only. Bending on another fly, I advised him to work his way through the bushes and reach the little bar where I had landed my last trout. By that means he could cast up toward the pool and would avoid at least one pile of brush. When he was fairly stationed I went back to camp, took my bamboo and worked my way down to the water at the mouth of the cañon.

A likely place presented itself a few rods above; I crossed a riffle and made my way to it on a beach of gravel about three feet wide. The pool was quite deep on the farther side and the bottom de-

scended somewhat abruptly from the bar, so that I could not get more than eight feet from the bushes behind me without going over my boots. It was a difficult place to cast from, with even twenty feet of line, without catching the bushes, but I managed to get the fly away, after a fashion not satisfactory. It seemed the rule, however, that no matter where or how the fly landed, except on the shallow riffles, a trout was almost certain to put in an appearance. In the clear and smooth-flowing water in front of me, I saw a dozen beautiful fish; the one nearest the fly came up and took it. I soon landed him on the beach and tried again. We had made some stir, but it had no appreciable effect on the others, and I had another fastened in a few moments. This sort of angling has its disadvantages to the lover of the gentle art; it is too apt to curtail the measure of his enjoyment; he absorbs in half an hour a fund that, to be correctly appreciated, should consume double the time.

Instead of casting again at once, I stood watching the well-to-do citizens. One and another would rise to the surface, take in something I could not discern and settle back again; their existence seemed to be one of ease, as of mortals who had inherited or secured a competency, and were disposed to indolence. They moved with a dignity characteristic of high breeding. If one started in quest of a floating morsel his nearest neighbor courteously bowed him on, as it were,

and with a graceful wave of his caudal said plainly: "Oblige me by taking precedence." Seeing one larger than his mates behind a small rock, I sent the coachman in his vicinity. Two started, but the smaller one halted—it was age and beauty before beauty alone. Age with its wisdom declined and settled back, beauty and inexperience came forward again and was lost to his crystal world.

Was this experience of the one who refused greater than could be encompassed by human subtlety? I was a little piqued, perhaps, at the indifference manifested. He might be a hotel clerk, a justice of the peace or some other dignitary metamorphosed.

I lighted my pipe, sat under the shade of the mountain beeches, smoked and reflected. An ousel came suddenly round the elbow of the river and alighted in the edge of the water a few yards away. He bobbed up and down a few times, said something to himself and took a running dive for a few feet along the margin of the bar, came out again, bobbed and spoke, as though he might be rehearsing for some water-wagtail entertainment, then took another dive. Presently a second one came round the same course, pleased himself and me with an exhibition precisely like that of his predecessor and finally disappeared.

I changed the coachman for a gray hackle with a peacock body and stepped into the edge of the pool. "The deformed transformed" had resumed his station behind his desk, and I put the tempta-

tion in his way. He could not resist it; he had his price and I had ascertained its maximum; a very trifle indeed, the veriest fraud as usual, compounded of tinsel and feathers, appealing first to the eye, then to the palate, arousing his dormant wicked propensities, tickling not the least of these —his avarice. I felt, I must confess, a symptom of contempt for him, as the sting of death touched his lips. I watched him struggle, feeling something approaching vicious exultation. I could not, however, but admire his efforts to rid himself of the consequences of his folly. Repentance, if he experienced it, came too late; the inexorable hand of the fate he had courted was closing upon him. He must have said to himself, at intervals, while he lay gasping: "If I were only safe out of this—I would never put on airs again—to excite the pride of the most humble of creatures." Resignation, however, was not one of his attributes; so long as hope of escape held a place in the remotest corner of his soul, he debated between genuine repentance and its shadow. He would yet make endeavors to release himself; if successful his old ways would be avoided, and humility might find a place in his mind, perhaps. I was not thoroughly convinced that he had been sufficiently overcome to warrant this favorable conclusion; I was still anxious to put my hand on him; he might forget his lesson. Being myself unsettled, I experienced no trouble in attributing all the hallucination to the individual at the other

end of the line. One last, glorious endeavor, and he was free. I lifted my hat in token of his prowess, though I had not entirely pardoned his original conceit. When I saw him again he had safely ensconced himself between two rocks with his nose courting the opposite bank. He seemed very passive, with his tail at right angles with the gentle current. I watched him some time, but he did not move; he was prostrated, if ever fish was, in abject humiliation, crushed, absolutely, to earth.

I resolved to say nothing of my adventure. The Major would receive my story with an aggravating smile, a smile that quietly throws out temptation to anger and violence. Or Joshua might break out with that song of his:

"Tell me the old, old story."

But I will intrust it to you, in confidence, you understand. I am a very good judge and he weighed four pounds, if he weighed an ounce.

I recrossed the riffle and sought Mr. Dide. I found him within a few feet of where I had deposited him. He had procured his umbrella during my absence, and, with the patience commendable in the bait fisherman, was waiting for a rise in six inches of water. I watched him for a while and wondered if he would make even a fisherman; he possessed some of the gifts of the angler.

"I see you have that umbrella again, Mr. Dide."

"Aw, yes—it is so vewy waam, you know, in the sun."

"Have you caught anything?"

"Not yet, but I anticipate a vewy big one, by-and-by."

I went up to the pool with the drift, and casting my hackle close under the old log, was fast in a moment to the mate of the one I had secured before breakfast. Pursuing my former tactics I was soon by the side of our friend, who watched me with interest and encouraged me with his doubts of my ability to land the captive. When I finally brought him out, released him from the hook and rapped him on the head with a stone, Mr. Dide declared he never could accomplish such a feat.

"Why, my deah boy, he would smash my pole, you know."

His modesty gave me some hope that ultimately he would arrive at proficiency, barring the umbrella.

At noon the Major put in his appearance with twelve trout and two white-fish; the string weighed sixteen pounds.

"That is a splendid average," said the Major, spreading the fish out upon the grass, to be the more conveniently admired as individuals.

These white-fish were the first we had taken, although they are quite plentiful in the stream, and are sometimes an annoyance to those who are seeking trout only. Why they should be a source of vexation to any one is a mystery. The fish is beautiful in contour, more slender than the trout,

has a delicate mouth, rises eagerly to the fly, and its meat is delicious. Break a Brazil nut in two, and the firm white kernel will remind you of the meat of the white-fish when it has been properly cooked. They are good fighters withal, though they do not break the water when hooked as readily as the trout. To my mind the complaints have in them somewhat of affectation, unless one is indulging solely in the science of angling.

The following morning the camp was not astir until the sun came up over the hills and, shining in our faces, dried the moisture on our beards. The Major was the first to awake, and looking in Joshua's direction, discovered that individual in the enjoyment of his morning nap. He called to him:

"I thought you were going for a deer, Mr. Miles. You should have been up before daylight."

Joshua declared that such had been his intention, but on reflection he thought, that as he would have to wade the stream, he would not go.

"But there must be good hunting on this side, Mr. Miles."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder, but it looks better over on that side; mebbe I'll go when the grass dries off."

"If you had only mentioned your preference I would have gone out and driven a deer into camp."

"Now, look here, Major, can't you give us a rest? I was sleepy this morning, that's a fact."

Before day the next morning, the Major slipped

out of his blankets, and with his Winchester started off in the direction of the aspens on the hills below and back from the camp. The sun had fairly streaked the east with gold color, and I lay watching the coming light, dozing a few moments and then awakening to see the surroundings put on more definite shapes, when I heard the report of a rifle. Before the echo ceased its complainings I was asleep again, dreaming that the major had encountered a silver-tip, and, failing in his first shot, had been compelled to take to a tree. I saw the brute tearing away at the bark and my friend embracing the trunk a dozen feet from the ground. The comical side of the picture was appealing to me when the vision suddenly vanished. I had been aroused by my own laughter, and I saw the Major looking down at me with a broad smile on his face.

"You must have been indulging in a pleasant dream, my boy. Come, it is time you were out of bed. Mr. Miles, will you please put the saddle and bridle of Mr. Dide's on one of your mares and go with me? I have killed that deer."

The Major was wet to the waist. Joshua looked at him dolefully and crawled out, inquiring for the locality of the game. When the Major told him it was not half a mile away and he had seen fresh bear tracks, he accelerated his pace and longed for another rifle.

We had noticed every morning fresh deer signs along the margin of the river, and the Major had

stationed himself in some willows but a little way from the camp. Just after daybreak the buck, which he brought in was on his way for a morning tipple when the Major called him to a halt. The animal turned in his tracks on feeling the bullet, and the Major had followed for nearly half a mile, when he found him dead.

Joshua reported elk signs upon his return, and was enjoying a new fever from that cause; but he never found any cartridges in the magazine when the weapon was left in camp.

We had passed two weeks in our delightful retreat, seeing no one except the inhabitants of the neighboring ranch, who would visit us at intervals for a supply of trout, which we always had for them. In return they brought us such quantities of rich milk that we became surfeited. The weather had been superb, without a drop of rain, and we had no use even for the fly to shelter us at night. The Major wished for a shower to break the monotony, but we did not get it.

We had wondered more than once during our idle moments concerning the deacon and his whereabouts. One evening when Mr. Dide and myself were alone at the camp-fire, the Major and Joshua having gone to the neighboring ranch, I made bold to inquire of the gentleman touching the ladies in whose company we had left our friend. Mr. Dide answered:

"Miss Jennie is a cousin, I believe, of the Deacon, as you call him."

"But about the other lady, Mr. Dide?"

"Aw,—Miss Gwace!—she is a vewy chawming young lady, as you say."

"You have known her some time?"

"Aw—y-a-s."

Mr. Dide retired within himself, and I concluded, if I would learn anything, I must come to the point without indirection.

"She seems to be alone here; how does that happen?"

"Most extwaawdinawy—she is a vewy independent young lady and went away fwom home because of some misapwehension with her welatives. They pwoposed that she mahwy a gentleman who was distasteful to her and she declined."

"I admire her for declining such an alliance."

"So do I, you know—by Jove—I do! My impwession is that if the gentleman had known he was distasteful, he would have withdwawn himself —I know he would."

"You know the gentleman, then?"

"Aw, y-a-s. But it was too bad, you know, that she should be compelled to abandon her home. I have twied to pwevail on her to weconsidah and weturn, but she won't, you know. I have it fwom a weliable fwiend that she wan out of money heah last wintah, and became a waitah, watha than communicate with her welatives. She is a bwave young lady; I wegwet she deemed it necessawy to do so."

"What was her objection to the gentleman, Mr. Dide?"

"She said to her fathah that he was a simpleton, —the gentleman, I mean. She was wight, no doubt, but she is a vewy extwaawdinawy young lady, you know; she's a student of Dawwin and Huxley and those fellows, and the gentleman—aw—he is—aw —only a gentleman, you know, with no taste in that direction."

"Indeed, Mr. Dide, I believe you—he is a gentleman."

"Thanks. I—I know him and he would not have sanctioned it—weally—he would have ceased his attentions at once. It is a vewy unhappy situation—he was not advised until she had put her wesolution into effect. She is a vewy amiable young lady, but she has too much pwide to seek a wecconciliation with her pawents. I endeavahed to pwesent the mattah to her in the stwongest light, but she would not be moved."

"She seemed to be very favorably impressed with the Deacon, Mr. Dide," I ventured to insinuate.

"Aw, y-a-s, you are wight; the Deacon is, I think, a vewy estimable gentleman."

"But suppose he should not be serious, Mr. Dide—the Deacon is a stranger to you, and he might be trifling."

"Twifling! impossible! I cannot think so of him."

"Ah! Deacon! Deacon!" I thought, "you called this gentleman, contemptuously, 'a dude'—how do you compare with him?" and confessed to myself that the verdict was not in favor of my

friend. I had no question of the Deacon's integrity. I was looking only for one of the elements that go to make up a gentleman, and found that Mr. Dide was better endowed with unselfishness.

The Major and Joshua coming in, the subject between Mr. Dide and myself was dropped. That night when my friend and I were covered with our blankets, looking out at the bright lamps and ready to be wooed into unconsciousness by the river's melody, he said to me:

"I have changed my mind concerning our new friend. I thought he would be a bore, at least, but I have discovered him to be a gentleman."

"So have I." But I did not deem it necessary to explain to him why I had reached the same conclusion.

CHAPTER IX.

SUCCESS AND—SUCCESS.

BREAKING camp, we went down the river as far as Still Water. I left our old quarters with a feeling of regret, thinking that when I came again I should find them occupied; it was like giving up to strangers a home where life has been sweet. No one may question the stranger's right nor his good taste, but it is not a pleasant reflection that in due course one will be crowded out or will drop from his place, and the world will move round at the same old rate, as if one had never encumbered the earth; the thought tends to induce humility.

"It's like stickin' your finger in a pail of water, then pullin' it out and lookin' for the hole," said Joshua, as I expressed my regrets.

"I have heard that comparison before, Mr. Miles."

"So have I, Major. Mebbe I'll strike somethin' yet that you *ain't* heard."

The retort called a smile to the Major's face as he turned away.

The camp for a day on the Still Water gave the Major an opportunity to shoot a few ducks, and the variety of our larder was thus added to. I

found my way through the willows and reached a clear place on the bank. The pool thus exposed to me presented an abundance of fish, the water being perfectly clear and glassy on the surface. I cast into it and the inhabitants started in every direction away from the lure. It was a good place to practice delicacy, and I soon concluded that delicacy was not among my talents. Now and then I would deliver the fly in a way that caused no commotion; the trout would not look at it, and as I drew it across the water, they would come up gently and take something within a few feet of it, then settle back, leaving a little ripple on the surface to widen. I changed flies several times, but the result was still the same: neither variety nor size seemed of any avail, yet the trout were feeding. I put a shot on the leader, threw above, and drawing the fly down, allowed it to sink and moved it slowly among them. One fellow came forward a little and looked at it, and I became satisfied that I saw him turn up his nose in disgust. That a human being of ordinary intelligence, as he presumed me to be, should put such an abominable species of diet as a bedraggled coachman on his dining-table, was beyond laughing at or praying for,—words were too feeble to express his scorn—he could only turn up his nose and move away. The verdict was as clear to me as the water.

A grasshopper might decoy one of those fellows to destruction, but there could be no credit in that

to me, as an angler. It would be assuming the rôle of a Borgia and not taking an adversary with all his faculties alert—it would be secret poisoning and not the clean rapier glittering in the sunlight backed by a heart willing to take equal chances. I scorned the grasshopper in this emergency, as the beautiful denizen of the crystal scorned my ragged servitor.

Close to the bank I saw a white-fish moving slowly up stream, nosing the small rocks as if he might be in search of a tid-bit to tickle a fastidious palate. His small scales were distinct, and with the sun's rays playing upon them he was the perfection of beauty in color. His dainty mouth was fairly visible, turned up to me, and his gill-covers glistened like polished silver. I took the shot from the leader and dropped the fly upon the surface about a yard in front of him, barely moving it. The water was about four feet deep and he was near the bottom. When he caught sight of the fraud, it seemed to me that I saw his eyes suddenly distend; the iris became animated and shone within a flexible circle of pale gold, as he sculled quickly to the surface and closed upon the hook. At the critical moment I gave the fatal motion of the wrist and the trim quarry was fast. The instant he felt the sting he darted, like a flash of light through a clear topaz, for the bottom and centre of the pool. His flight was a strong, steady pull, always below the surface. I would draw him up, but the moment his nostrils tasted

the air, he would strive for the depths. Believing him too heavy to lift out, and the bank being too high and abrupt for me to get down to him, I permitted him to fight until he was too feeble to prevent my holding his head clear from the water. In this condition, and when I deemed a violent struggle among the possibilities merely, I drew him toward the bank, kneeled, and taking the leader in my left hand as low as I could reach, I swung him upon the grass; he came straight, without the slightest movement until he touched the ground, otherwise he would have been free. I could not but notice how firm his body felt, as I grasped him to take out the hook; there was no yielding whatever to the pressure of my hand; he might have been absolutely as solid as a stone. Then I thought of those who take it upon themselves to talk flippantly of these pieces of perfection in their way, and felt a sympathy for the grumblers in their weakness.

I placed the fish in the shade of the willows and lengthened the line again; I felt encouraged by my success and thought I might secure a trout. They had returned to their several stations, after a short respite from the recent commotion, but all that I could see, scattered as I threw them the fly, save one; he seemed indifferent and remained at his post. I cast in his vicinity several times; he finally seemed inclined to move, and I coaxed him, as I thought, though perhaps I may have incited him to anger and a determination to drive

my monstrosity away. Whether rage, sudden hunger or curiosity impelled him was a matter of indifference to me; suffice it to say that he abruptly darted up and took the hitherto scouted mystery, and I fastened it directly through his tongue. My movement and his own impetus brought him clear of the water; he went back with a plunge, was up again in a few moments, shaking himself in a very paroxysm of rage and terror. Half a dozen times he rushed hither and yon, but at all times he felt the spring of the splendid toy in my hand. If he moved to the opposite shore, it checked his career and responded to his every motion, as he circled back. A straight shoot directly up stream, or down, the bamboo arched over him like the wand of fate. He would pause at times as if by contemplation he might solve the occult cause of his restraint, and thus devise an avenue of escape, but his destiny was determined. A few more struggles and he surrendered. He could not release himself; I could not free him, or I verily believe I should have bowed deferentially and requested him to retain his sword.

Even when he was so far exhausted that I could draw him toward me without resistance, I dared not attempt to lift him out as I had his predecessor. I called the Major and he came to me, held on by the willows, and slipping down the bank seized and threw the gallant champion upon the sod. It seemed like indignity to him to have him thus handled, and I told the Major so. He should

have been lifted out with the net and received with a delicacy commensurate with his greatness.

The white-fish weighed one pound and a half, the trout one pound and a quarter. Caught within fifteen minutes of each other, it was a fit time to determine their qualities as warriors. The trout, of course, from the dash and brilliancy of his evolutions, must bear the palm, but the sturdy determination of his neighbor in the pool must have a share of praise. I love them both, with a little more admiration in my heart for the black-spotted denizen.

The time to fish this water when a full creel is desired quickly is when there is a slight breeze, just sufficient force in the summer air to caress the surface into a gentle ripple. I warrant me, then there will be leaping and sport that will be fast and glorious. I had read of a trick, and tried it. I found a cottonwood leaf for my purpose, and wetting it, that the fly might stick to it gently, threw it into the pool. After several trials I succeeded in getting the fly partly upon it with sufficient hold at least to guide the leaf, which I worked down to where the trout seemed more numerous. I gave the fly a gentle flirt and it fell from the novel argosy into the water; it had not floated a foot before it was seized, and I had another fight on my hands, much to the interest and amusement of the Major.

At noon Mr. Dide expressed a preference for our late camp over the present one.

"I cannot heah the wipple of the watah, you know," was his explanation.

"Then, Mr. Dide, we will move on, and make camp below the Still Water, for a few days," said the major, expressing my wishes as well. "I have a weakness for that music, myself," he continued; "as cowering upon the lofty cliff, I trembling court the wondrous depths; with eager eyes I seek the angry rush and the flashing tints of foaming waves. Borne high upon the ambient air, the solemn whispers of troubled souls and the rippling laughter of the blest reach past me, intertwined, to sink again in lamentation. Then, lying prone, my attentive ears drink in the softer sighs of the sweeping crystal, and stills all my pulse to catch the cadence of the liquid rhythm, sweet as the fading notes of some dear vesper hymn, lingering in hushed cathedral aisles."

"Bwavo! bwavo! my deah Majah! you have won my heart!" exclaimed Mr. Dide, clapping his hands, and ecstatic enthusiasm apparently exuding from his entire person. My amazement kept me silent. That the Major should indulge in "that sort of sky-scraping," as Joshua irreverently expressed it, rather weakened my friend in our *chef's* estimation for the time. The Major received Joshua's strictures in dignified silence, which made the latter think there was more in the Major's poetic escapade than mere words, and, like every other mystery to the average intellect, it became weighty; he requested the Major to write

it down, and that is how it found a place here; I purloined the manuscript.

We moved down after the noonday meal and made camp in a secluded spot not a great way from the forks of the river.

That evening, when our fire burned low, Joshua felt in the mood to sing. Having concluded one hymn he struck into another familiar to Mr. Dide. The effusion had a refrain of some sort, and we were all startled by hearing that taken up and repeated by female voices. Not being superstitious, the Major moved out of the light of our own fire and discovered the reflection of another some little distance away. We had, in the vicinity, mortals like ourselves, but fairer, no doubt, and Joshua, with Mr. Dide's help, sent out frequent invitations to the unknown singers, bringing a response until the hour grew late. The episode was not an unpleasant one, and I thought it might pave the way to an acquaintance with our neighbors. In the morning I started on a prospecting tour, and the first individual I met proved, much to my surprise, to be the Deacon, whom I discovered gathering wood with which to cook breakfast.

Where did he come from?

"Why, Trapper's Lake—we came down the river yesterday, with the intention of spending a week on the South Fork, hoping to find you and the Major. I had no notion you two were the singers, or I should have called last night."

"Then you have the ladies with you?"

"Oh, yes, my cousin and her mother,—you saw my cousin at Cascade,—they were the singers you heard answering you."

"The Major and I were not the singers, Deacon."

"No? well, who is camped over there by you?"

"Our cook and Mr. Dide were the singers you heard."

"Mr. Dide—oh, he's with you, is he?" and there came a smile into the Deacon's face, as he repeated the name, that, with his tone, indicated nothing to be apprehended by the speaker from the vicinity or presence of Mr. Dide, and in addition, his air was patronizing. Had I not known the Deacon well, having much faith in his kindness of heart, his manner in speaking of my newer friend would have proved offensive.

"If you are so fortified in your own mind, Deacon, you can afford to speak less cavalierly of Mr. Dide."

"Fortified?" he repeated, "how fortified? Don't talk in riddles, old boy."

"You understand, well enough—victory should make you courteous to the conquered."

"Why, my dear sir, I never treated him uncivilly."

"Perhaps not, but you spoke uncivilly of him—you called him a dude, and your manner, just now——"

"Well, is he not a dude?"

"He is every inch a gentleman, Deacon."

"I may not dispute that; but you seem to take great interest in him."

"Not without reason, Deacon. What became of Miss Grace?"

"Miss Grace—why, she's in camp there, with my aunt and cousin." The Deacon's face was wreathed in a smile unmistakable in its import.

"I'm not disposed to be impertinent, Deacon—but are you engaged to Miss Grace?"

"Engaged! why, my dear sir, we were married ten days ago, at Glenwood."

"The d—deuce you were——"

"Fact, my dear old boy—and she's the sweetest——"

"Spare us, Deacon! you seem to have been expeditious."

"Not so,—I have known her for a year, nearly; we were engaged last winter. Cousin Jennie and she were schoolmates east."

"Oh, that's the way of it. Do you know that Mr. Dide will be glad to congratulate you?"

"No, I *don't* know it—to tell you frankly, he was the cause of her leaving home; perhaps I ought to feel friendly toward him because of that—indirectly he became my benefactor——"

"Wait a moment, Deacon, let me tell you something," and I detailed the conversation I had held with Mr. Dide over the camp-fire. "Now, you see, if he had been aware of her wishes she would have had no excuse for leaving; she did not refuse him directly, and her bear of a father had set his

mind in one direction and thought, no doubt, he was taking in the horizon, when he was only in a small hole of his own digging. Mr. Dide explained this to your wife, at Cascade, where they accidentally met, and she has failed to tell it to you. You know now how unselfish he was and is. Could you have relinquished your object with the same degree of nobleness?"

"Not one in a thousand would. But I don't just like the idea of some other man loving my wife better than I do."

"So long as she does not love him in return, you can have no cause of complaint."

"I guess you're right. I'll take in this wood and call on Mr. Dide."

Our friend received the announcement from me very quietly and greeted the Deacon cordially on his arrival. When the latter went away, Mr. Dide sauntered off to the river bearing his rod and umbrella. We saw nothing of him at noon, and later on I concluded to hunt him up. I had not gone far when I discovered him seated on the edge of a pool. He had one trout, thoroughly dried, and was waiting for another rise; the fly had floated down and lodged against a bit of willow that hung to the bank by its roots, while the limbs vibrated with the current. He started when I spoke to him, but looked up cheerfully, saying:

"I am afwaid I shall not make a success at fishing."

"Not if you sit still, Mr. Dide; you should keep

moving and the fly must not be allowed to rest a moment."

"Aw—that makes one's ahms ache, you know."

It might have made his heart ache less, perhaps.

"Supper is about ready—won't you come in to camp?"

"Weally, I did not think it was so late—thanks."

In the evening Mr. Dide announced that he should go to Meeker on the following day, and thence he knew not where, definitely.

"You'll go to Glenwood, won't you? I'd like to have you take word to my folks and tell 'em how we're gettin' on," Joshua requested, on Mr. Dide's stating his determination to return to civilization. The gentleman consented in his usual affable way. At the earliest opportunity, I informed Mr. Dide who Joshua's "folks" were.

"Weally! that vewy extwaadinawy old lady! I shall be obliged to wequest him to wite—then I can dwop it in the mail, you know."

And so on the morrow Mr. Dide drifted out of sight.

CHAPTER X.

VAPOR.

At the next evening's camp-fire I took down the Deacon's report of his trip:

"The trail from Glenwood Springs to Trapper's Lake is good, and the country through which it runs is always attractive, beautiful, and in places grand. In fact, it is a difficult matter, you know, to go astray of magnificent scenery in these beloved mountains of ours. We made one camp, the ladies being out for pleasure and not in a hurry, and for one day's ride the trip is a little tiresome, especially if you are not accustomed to the saddle. Our camp outfit and provisions made light loads for two pack animals.

"The first view of the lake coming in from the south side is finer than that from the trail out of Egeria Park. By the latter route you come directly upon the lake from the timber, low down the mountain side, and look directly across. By the way we came you get a fine view of the lake first from a point higher up the mountain, and can look down upon it, along its length, toward the outlet. You have a foreground of the beautiful lake, and through the wide gap at its foot a

Trapper's Lake.

distant range of hills veiled in the gray mist forms a background, while the lake itself, except at the outlet, is shut in by the high-terraced mountains. These mountains, you will remember, reach down to the very margin of the lake, excepting only at the little meadow on the left of the outlet. The terraces are thickly covered with pines until the last precipice is reached, which runs up above the timber line.

"We remained four days there, fishing from rafts. There are two varieties of trout in the lake, the light and the salmon-colored. The light variety are the fighters, of course, and so abundant that but for the presence of others to help us dispose of them they would spoil on our hands; they are large, too, running uniformly to fourteen inches in length.

"I killed a buck in the little meadow near the outlet. The Deaconess declares that those four days were 'just too lovely.'"

"But about the trail, Deacon, from the lake to the forks here?"

"It is a good trail. Did you ever see an Indian trail that wasn't good? Our red brother, as you call him, is a first-class engineer in that respect; he is the only one who accomplishes his purpose prompted by pure laziness. We took the ridge part of the way, and made a short *détour* to see the Devil's Causeway, and on that account saw a band of elk; there were fifty in the band at least, because I counted that number, and missed some

without doubt. There was indeed a commotion in the camp when I announced the discovery of bear signs, but I succeeded in allaying the fright by persuading them to believe that Cuffy was no more liable to attack us than the deer were. We had splendid fishing in the Pot Hole Valley, and I want you to know that I landed a trout of five pounds and four ounces out of one of those pools, and that's no fish story. The trout run large as they do here in the South Fork. White-fish are plentiful, too; the largest one I caught weighed a scant two pounds, and I know you agree with me as to their excellence on the table. The valley is filling up, though, with settlers; it is not so much in the wilderness as it was a few years ago."

"You are having an unusual wedding tour, Deacon."

"But a very happy one. Just try it, and see for yourself."

"I have been travelling the 'long path' too many years for that, Deacon."

"Well, you'll enjoy it, all the same."

Of course I had to thank the Deacon for the compliment and I promised to "try it."

The next day a few fleecy clouds climbed up over the hills in the west, and in the afternoon we moved further down the river toward Meeker. That evening we put up the fly for the first time, lapped and pegged down the ends. We thought we might have rain before morning, but were disappointed.

The following morning the clouds put in an appearance again; the sky had been absolutely clear during the most of our trip, and the pretty harbingers afforded a relief. From white they gathered into clusters and turned to gray, and the drapery of a darker shade, hanging below, told of the rain. It passed us by, however, and we had a beautiful sunset. The west was clear, while just above a range of hills in the east, veiled with a thin blue mist, was a stratum of pale bronze, its upper line apparently as straight as if run by a level. From this base of miles in length there arose a great mass of clouds, seemingly thousands of feet in height, and white as carded wool. Its northern and southern ends were almost perpendicular, and its summit of great rolling folds was outlined against the delicate blue of the sky. For half an hour there seemed no change; the huge pile stood apparently still, pure and white as newly-fallen snow. Then, as if moved by some gentle and artistic freak of its presiding genius, a rift in a mountain side appeared, reaching from the bronze base to the top, the line was sharply defined in white and gray and the shadow was cast against the background of white to our right. Away at the northerly summit a small bit seemed to break away, or was left; it divided, and in a few moments there were clearly defined a pair of gigantic wings, regular in their contour as those of a bird. In another place a gray tower presented itself with a great arched doorway near its base.

Castles would spring into a brief existence, machicolated and loop-holed, to be lost again in some modern cottage with vine-clad porch. Along the upper margin figures would come and go as if the gods and their retinues were all abroad directing a magnificent display. And in one corner, by itself, there was plainly outlined a fleecy hood, into which I caught myself intently gazing, expecting to see the laughing eyes and face of a beautiful child. All this in tones of white and gray. But as the sun sank lower, veils of slanting mist appeared here and there, the apparently solid mass was being broken up, the summit was still white scroll-work, but below, the line of bronze had turned into a crimson shade, within an uneven apex; the lead-colored base of the main body was changing to a purple hue, and all through the mass the rose and amber were being laid in, shifting from moment to moment, until the hues became bewildering in their multitude; then, as the sun went down, the gray tones returned again, such as the artist may sometimes give a hint of but never paints.

It was a great storm we had witnessed, away over the range to the east; we were far from the sound of the artillery, and it hid from us the flash of its batteries.

During the beautiful display the Deacon's young wife sat a few feet in front of me and to the left. She had moved but once, and that was when the first shadow came and marked out the great gorge; she turned round then, and said to me:

"Is it not grand?"

When the rose tints faded out, she turned again; there was a mist in her dark eyes, and a perceptible quiver about her pretty lips; she spoke in a half-whisper, as of one just awakened from a happy vision:

"Did you ever see anything so glorious? and yet I felt all the time as if I must kneel and look upon it with reverence."

I did not blame Mr. Dide, nor the Deacon; they couldn't help it; I envied her father.

"When we can have our backs to the afternoon sun, with a mountain range to the east of us, these magnificent carnivals of shadows are not uncommon."

"Did you see the baby's bonnet? was it not too cute for anything?" and then, half-musingly to me, "you have lived in these beautiful mountains since before the time I was born—you ought to be happy!"

I told her that happiness was my normal condition, and then she wanted to know of me if I had ever read Ruskin, and I said I hadn't.

"I wish he could have seen what we have this afternoon."

"He would have criticised and found fault with it."

"It is unkind of you to say so, knowing nothing of him."

The rebuke was quick, earnest, and, I confessed to myself, not wholly unwarranted. I determined

to read Ruskin, and I presume that if the Major and the others had not just then drifted up to us, I should have been led off after "Darwin and those fellows." With such disciples the philosophers in question might effect a revolution rapidly.

The Major and the others, except Joshua, had much to say about the afternoon's entertainment. Joshua didn't see anything except a great bank of clouds, and knew there had been a storm on the main range.

While we were at supper (and since we had ladies in company, the Major had improvised a table out of some boards which he picked up, using the wagon seats for supports), our table now decked with wild flowers, and the tin plates and cups presenting a brighter appearance, we had a call. Our visitor was a lank mortal in flannel shirt, blue cotton overalls, and the ordinary white felt hat of the country. He was not a cowboy, but "a hand" from a neighboring ranch, who had "hoofed it in last fall."

"Evenin'," was his salutation, with a nod, intended for all of us. "Bin campin' out, ain't ye? Had a good time, s'pose—lots o' fish and sech? Didn't see nothin' of a roan cayuse with a strip in face, up crick? No! been a-huntin' the darn brute since noon-time; branded 'J. K.' on his left hip."

"You'd better keep on, if you count on findin' him before night," hinted Joshua, shaking a flapjack in the frying-pan preparatory to a final turn.

"Stranger in these parts?" the visitor inquired of Joshua.

"Yes; been here a week."

"More'n that—I see you go up crick more'n two weeks ago. What's yer business?"

"Mindin' it."

"Mindin' what?"

"My business."

"Don't know as you'll ever die o' brain fever."

"Neither will you, if you stay in this country. I wonder you wasn't buried before spring."

"They wasn't no fellers round here handy 'nough——"

"What can we do for you, my friend?" broke in the Major, in some doubt as to the result of the dialogue.

"Nothin', 'bleeged to ye, 'less yer got sumpin's good for cuts; cut my finger sharpnin' a sickle; durn near cut it off an' it's festerin'—see." He exposed the wounded member. If there is anything in life with a tendency to raise one's curiosity, or anything else, I know of nothing more potent than a sick finger at meal time. The stranger was generously determined that none of us should miss the luxury. The Major stared, the ladies turned away, and Joshua, out of all patience, exclaimed:

"Come off the shelf, man, the flies'll eat you up."

The stranger's attention was distracted.

"Whatcher mean? I ain't got no flies on me, mister."

"Cover up that paw o' yours and go after your cayuse—don't you see it up yonder in the willers?" And Joshua took our visitor by the arm and started him in the right direction. He led him farther than was necessary, the pony being in sight, and they had some conversation on the way, but we did not overhear it, and they seemed to part with a satisfactory understanding.

The next day we made a move still farther down stream and camped in the vicinity of the site selected by the government for the erection of a saw-mill that was to aid in civilizing the Utes. The habitations that had been erected at great expense were no longer visible; literally not one stone remained upon another. The boiler was perforated with bullet-holes, and rusty bits of machinery lay scattered over a square mile of the level mesa. A more complete wreck than this, effected by the gentle savages, would be hard to conceive, and a more sorrowful exhibition of sheer viciousness could not have been expressed; it was as if the destroyers had determined to obliterate every vestige that might give rise even to a memory of the kindness intended them. Those beautiful symbols of peace, the doves, were plentiful, flitting about the ruins, as docile as if the valley had never known a wrathful moment. The birds were not within the protection of the law, but to kill them in such a place seemed like adding sacrilege to cruelty, so not one was harmed.

Upon the breaking up of this camp our company

was to be divided. The Deacon and his relatives would turn off to the right a few miles below, to visit the Thornburg battle-ground, while the Major and I would take our way back over the old route to Glenwood Springs. One more day's sojourn on the beautiful river at our first camping-ground, below Meeker, and we bade farewell, reluctantly, to the charming valley. But the keen edge of our unwillingness was softened by an assurance to ourselves that another summer would find us again with our tent pitched amid the sweet peacefulness. We would come again, if for no other purpose, to make acquaintance with the trail to Trapper's Lake—the gem of the Roan Range.

There is no comfort whatever in towels, with a tin cup for a bath-tub; the White River is no place to bathe in, unless one would encourage pneumonia or the rheumatism. The sight of the great pool at Glenwood, after several weeks of travesty, gave a hint of marvellous luxury. It was as if we approached the performance of a religious rite; we stood upon the edge, filled with the eagerness of neophytes, but hesitating for a moment before penetrating the mystery whose revelation we sought. But once within the warm embrace of the voluptuous crystal, the Wesleyan admonition was made manifest; we washed, and worshipped close to the throne. Then we thanked the men whose enterprise had converted the possibility of the luxury into a fact.

"Epicurean Rome could boast of no such treat

as this," exclaimed the Major, shaking the crystal drops from his shaggy mane, as he rose to the surface after the first plunge.

"I don't know much about Rome," said Joshua, "but this suits me, this does."

We left the bright little city beautifully nestled among the carmine hills, as the afternoon sun was caressing the summits of the mountains in the west. We were again on the rail, speeding up the valley of the Roaring Fork. A slight bend in the road and Mount Sopris towers grandly, in front and to the right of us, with its long patch of snow offering a perpetual challenge to our daily friend.

The ride up the great gorge in the western slope to the top of the Saguache Range affords a grander pageant than that in descending. One experiences a sensation of quiet, while one is looking down upon a panorama that is drifting. As the sun touches only the highest peaks the magnificent cliffs and wooded mountain sides are in shadow, seem animate, and as if stealing away, phantom-like, into the deepening twilight below. But the sunlight of the morrow will clothe the scene in new beauties, and the summer days to come will be bountiful in fresh surprises for the sojourner in these recesses of the majestic hills.

The Switchback.

CHAPTER XI.

PIKE'S PEAK.

THE name has a familiar sound; I have heard it almost every day for nearly three decades, and wherever English is spoken the name has been mentioned. Having it in sight daily, with its long slope reaching up to the apex over fourteen thousand feet high, its north face always clothed in or fretted with snow, it might seem that it would grow monotonous. Monotony is not possible with the magnificent eminence and, like the presence of one we love, it is always welcome. The great ice-field at the pole is as to the earth but the thickness of a hair, the great mountain range as a wrinkle on the surface; but we measure the thickness and the heights by miles. They who made the Bible possible loved the high places of the earth; the law was there given to the great leader, and the beloved Master sought the mountain top to pray. It lifted him away from the earth while he was of it, but brought him nearer to the Father. It is the vantage ground of humility, the sanctuary where arrogance cannot enter.

The devil was lacking in tact when he offered the world to the Master from a mountain top; his

royal highness was out of his element, the atmosphere was repugnant. Neither he nor his pupils lack ambition, but on a mountain top there is nothing to which mortal may aspire, except the unknowable, and for the unknowable he is made willing to bide his time in meekness. It is no place for his majesty to proselyte; his most zealous disciples even, are liable to step into the path he never designed for them. No doubt the devil would have failed, on the occasion in question, had he selected a valley where the air was impure, but to seek a mountain top as the theatre for the bribery of One purer than the element he breathed, only goes to show that the devil, with all his accredited intelligence, was a very great ass. The only mystery to me is that he himself was not then and there led captive and future generations saved from his machinations. The solution may be that, being already condemned, he was beyond the pale of divine influence. I would, however give the devil his due, and should be glad to surmise that he longed to be clean, but was so much of a dolt as not to be worth regenerating.

The first man to climb a mountain peak may be pardoned exultation at the accomplishment of his feat. The gallant officer whose name this mountain bears essayed that exploit and failed, though history says he wrought valiantly. Grand monuments are not infrequently erected to the undeserving. We have other mountains with titles a little more satirical; there can be no ob-

jection to commemorating the memory of a dead hero, for a man is rarely a hero until he is dead, and this is no paradox. But except in a very few instances, it were well to leave the erection of memorials to the intimate friends of the dear departed, rather than to appropriate, without permission, the works of the Almighty. Mountains, however, are abundant, and we, not being the owners, can afford to give them away; it were better, though, to reward our live friends out of our own earnings. We know in such case they would have the chance at least to appreciate our acknowledgment of their merits.

He who goes up a mountain by trail may exult in a lesser degree than the first explorer. But all may not surmount unexplored mountains; many cannot do so even by trail. To him, then, who makes the happiness of conversion from the ills of this life possible to all, if only for an hour, great credit is due, and he may, with an easy conscience no doubt, exact toll for his achievement.

To the æsthetic it may seem like a sacrilege to disfigure a great mountain with a road; but a road for human needs is so slight a scratch here on the earth's surface that it does not mar the surroundings. The good that it does outweighs the apparent desecration. As the Major and myself aspire to that which is high, and as neither of us might reach the summit of the peak by the primitive methods any more than office may now be so reached, the opportunity to gratify our ambition

by carriage was a blessing. The novelty must be considered as adding to the zest.

The mountain is not visible from Cascade, the initial point of the road; the intervening hills shut it out. Starting thence we follow the Fountain up a very little distance, then turn to the left along the face of the first hill, then to the right, and so winding our way for two miles we reach the vicinity of the Grotto in Cascade Cañon. In a direct line we are half a mile from the starting-point. Over and through the pines that sparsely cover the mountain side, and over beds of wild flowers that carpet the slope, we can, before this distance is accomplished, obtain a fair view of the valley of the Fountain, Cascade and Manitou, thence out on to the broad plains, rising blue and dim until they kiss the horizon. One does not look for valleys in the mountain tops, but a mountain top reached is still further surmounted, and the road winds through aspen glades and the air is freighted with the odor of pines.

The four horses trundle the light Beach wagon along most of the way at a trot. The driver tells you that after a little while the horses must be brought down to a walk. The grade is not steep, but "in the light air a fast gait would be a little hard on the stock."

Eight and a half miles we have come in a little less than two hours. "A pretty good road," that allows the making of such time to an elevation of over three thousand feet, at a guess. We are half

way and are still in the timber. "The horses are changed to mules here"—an extraordinary metamorphosis, certainly—that is the way the driver put it, but there was no mystery in his language, except to a Boston lady, who was anxious to witness the process. Verily one must speak by the card in such a presence, or "equivocation will undo us." The four mules seemed to consider their load a trifle and they moved as jauntily as if out for a holiday.

To beguile the tediousness of the way we were assured that on returning we should "come in a whirl." The motive that prompted the information was commendable, and the driver to be excused—he travelled the road every day and his early pleasure had simply turned into an attractive matter of business. We told him not to hurry on our account, as it was our desire to miss no part of the scenery. He said he should come back in two hours and a half. I had ridden behind mules before—I mean in period of time—and was doubtful touching the prospective gloriousness of the journey, but he assured me that it was perfectly safe. He spoke of a "switch-back," and there was an intimation of occult peril in his manner. When we reached the vicinity of the timber line he pointed out the mystery. From our point of vision the zigzag scratches away up on the steep mountain side reminded me of old times. I was having a longitudinal view of a few sections of worm fence running up a hill at an

angle of seventy degrees; at least a man under the influence of spirits would say it was a longitudinal view. Considered as a fence, from an economical basis, the angles were unnecessarily acute; it might fairly have represented five miles of fence and half a mile of ground in a straight line, or it looked as if unknown powers at each end were trying to jam the thing together and make it double up on itself.

I was very much interested in it. As a line for an irrigating ditch it might be pronounced a success. As nothing goes down a ditch except water, and very little of that in a dry season, nobody is put in jeopardy.

"And you come down there at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour?" I asked.

"Yes, oh, yes, easy enough."

"I should think it would be easy, especially if you went off one of those corners."

"You wouldn't know the difference."

"No, I suppose not. It must be a glorious ride, coming down at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour, I think you said?"

"Yes, eight or nine, mebbe less, dependin'."

"You can make it in less time, then?"

"Certainly."

"And turn round those corners?"

"'Course, how else? You don't s'pose I'm thinkin' 'bout rollin' down the mountain side?"

I wondered what else it would be without snow on the ground; but the driver seemed a little too

short of breath to answer. I accounted for his deficiency in this regard because of the altitude; we were above timber line, eleven thousand feet and over from sea-level. The pines had become dwarfed, naked on one side, and were leaning toward the rocks above them, or, in their sturdy struggle for existence, they clung to the precipitous mountain side like matted vines. Looking down from a certain point I observed a large quantity of the road resembling a corpulent angle-worm in several stages of colic. I could not resist appealing to the driver again; I don't think anybody could.

"Do you go round all those places at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour?"

"Of course."

"And you don't slow up?"

"What should I slow up for?"

"So as not to turn over, you know."

"I never turned over in my life, and I drove stage in California twenty years."

I believed he was a liar, but deemed it inexpedient to tell him so, although he was a small man.

"Never had a runaway either, I suppose?" and sitting behind him I casually—it being convenient—put my hand on his biceps; the arm was not large, but assuring.

"No."

My opinion of his veracity was not augmented.

"I hardly think you can make the time you say you can."

"Just wait and see."

"I'm sure it will be grand; I've been suffering for such an experience."

"I didn't know but you was gittin' a little nervous—they sometimes do."

"Nervous! I'm an old stager. I have ridden with Bill Updyke and Jake Hawks many a mile in these mountains. Take it in the winter time, down hill, for instance, the road covered with ice and the driver obliged to whip his horses into a dead run to keep the coach from sliding and swinging off such a place as that," and I pointed to a precipice several hundred feet perpendicular at our left. "That's coaching!" and I placed my hand upon his shoulder affectionately. During the colloquy the Major had not opened his lips.

The vicinity is the dwelling-place of desolation; nothing but rocks about us. What had once perhaps been a solid mass of trachyte is split to fragments in the mill of the centuries, and bits from as big as one's fist to the size of one's body or a small house lay tumbled in a confused and monstrous heap, as though there might have been in the remote ages, a great temple here dedicated to the gods of old, and now in shapeless ruins.

Of the view from this great mountain peak, what shall I or any one say? Nothing! It does not admit of description; upon it, you can understand why the Indian never mounts so high. It is one of the places whence comes his inspiration of deity, the temple of his god, and he may not

desecrate it with his unhallowed feet; it gathers the storm, and the sun caresses it into a smile and crowns it with glory, as he views it reverently from the valley. But we, the civilized, penetrate the mystery of these heights and find, what? humility! and feel as though we should have worshipped from afar. We have risen to receive the divine inspiration, our brother has remained below to kiss submissively the nether threshold of the sanctuary. Which is nearest to the Father?

It is very still to-day; no sound greets you save the gentlest murmur of the summer wind brushing lightly across the uninviting rocks. The wide plains checkered with green and gold, stretching away out below you, give you no sign. The city you see there, bustling with the ambition of youthful vigor, is silent as death; you recognize it as a town-plat on paper, that is all, except that it adds to the sense of your own insignificance; it may make you wonder, perhaps, why you were ever a part of the life there; it may be a shadow that you look down upon, as you would recall an almost faded dream. You turn.

"And the mountain world stands present
And behold a wond'rous corps—
Well I knew them each, though never
Had we met in life before—
Knew them by that dream-world knowledge
All unknown to earthly lore."

Just below you a vast ocean bed of billowy hills, with its stately pines dwarfed to shrubs, its shores

looming up in the dim distance through their dainty veil of gray, and brooding over all that

> "Awful voice of stillness,
> Which the Seer discerned in Horeb;
> That which hallowed Beth El's ground."

It seems like sacrilege, but the interest in that town-plat down there, or in one like it, begins tugging at the skirts of one's adoration. The sun is going down and we also must go.

I had an interview with the driver, out behind the barn. (There is a signal station on the summit and the barn is a necessity.)

"You are sure you can go to Cascade from here in two hours and a half?" I inquired.

"Certain."

"Take something?" and I made a feint of reaching into the inside pocket of my coat for "something" I did not have.

"Can't! that's agin' the rules—I'm a man of family and I don't care to lose my job."

"So am I a man of family, and my friend, the Major there, he has a family—a wife and nine children, all young. You love your family?"

"What do you ask that for? 'Course I do."

"So does the Major love his—the eldest only ten years old. You noticed, perhaps, on coming up, when we were talking about making time, going down 'in a whirl;' I think you expressed it so? Yes, he said not a word, just sat and listened. He was thinking about the seventeen miles down hill,

round those short curves, in two hours and a half. The Major has a slight heart trouble, and any little excitement, like rolling down the mountain side, or getting upset, might be injurious to him. Being a man with a large family I desire to avoid his running any risk—you understand? His family is dependent on him and he has no life insurance. Now, the making of this trip in two hours and a half might be well enough for me, because I am used to it, you know; I haven't so much of a family, and I've ridden with Bill Updyke and Jake Hawks, and there is nothing I should like better than just such a ride as you proposed—I'd glory in it, but I'm a little uneasy about the Major. The doctor has already warned him against any undue excitement. Hold on a minute! there is another matter: he'd never hint that he is nervous, he is very averse to having it thought that he is troubled that way—see? And just as like as not, to show you that he is not nervous, he would tell you to 'Let 'em out!' Now —hold on a minute! if he should tell you so, don't you do it—you just go round those curves quietly, and trot along easy like, or walk. He's a very close friend of mine, you can understand. Take this," and I slipped a half-dollar into the driver's hand. Just then I heard the Major yelling to me with the voice of a strong man in enviable health to "hurry up."

The driver accepted the half-dollar and went round one end of the barn to the carriage, while I

took the other way. When we were seated he touched the off leader gently, the team started, and then he twirled the long lash of his whip with a graceful and fancy curve that rounded up with a report like that of a small pistol. The mules struck into a gallop and I concluded that my half-dollar was wasted, literally thrown away, to say nothing of my other appeal. The loss of the latter caused me the more chagrin—the money was a trifle. But think of that blessed stage-driver ignoring my eloquence! By the great horn spoon! as Joshua would have expressed it, if I had a gun and was not deterred by the thought of consequences, I'd leave the wretch as food for the eagles —he'd never be missed. Just about the time I had him fairly killed and his body comfortably rolled over a precipice where it would never be discovered, he came to the first turn. The mules were on a dead run, and what did that—blessed driver do? He just let that silk out again, gave a yell like a Comanche and whirled round that bend without so much as allowing the wheels to slide a quarter of an inch, and away he went, down the short, straight stretch as though he had been paid to go somewhere in a hurry. When he made the next turn I leaned over and said quietly: "Let me see that half-dollar I gave you; perhaps it is plugged."

He changed his lines and whip into his left hand and passed over the suspected coin with his right. I substituted a silver dollar, which he

slipped into his pocket, straightened out his lines and brought the mules down to a trot.

"Why don't you let 'em out, driver?" inquired the Major.

The driver looked round as if he thought I had addressed him.

"I think you can let 'em go," I said, and he did! Along the straight chutes! around the bends! away and down, with a merry jingle of the harness, the cool air turned into a breeze that caressed our cheeks as lovingly as the kiss of a child! Away and down, with the gleeful "hi! he! g'lang there" of the driver, the mountains began to tower above us! Away and down, with the sharp reports of the curling lash, the cold granite and dwarfed shrubs changed, and we sped in among the stately pines! Away and down, with hearts as light as the perfumed air, the flashes of the sun stealing through the trees salutes our flushed faces, and every moment a Te Deum Laudamus whispers in ecstasy from our half-closed lips. Eight miles and a half in thirty-five minutes! Was there ever before such a ride vouchsafed to mortal?

We sighed for four fresh mules to take us the remainder of the way. The exhilaration was not lost behind the horses, it was only toned down. As the evening shades began to touch the valley and while the sun yet kissed the mountains above us, we brought up at the starting-place, happy.

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